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of two  
Saurers



1937  
Singer  
7cwt van



# Heritage COMMERCIALS

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OLB

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**N Gauge**

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NLRT003 Leyland Royal Tiger W Alexander **NEW** £7



NSET004 5 Piece Bus Set London Transport **NEW** £27.50  
**Cars**

NWB004 VW Beetle Anthracite **NEW** £3.75

**OO Gauge (1:76 Scale)**

**Base Toys Ltd.**

Base Toys - Buses



B209A Bristol MW6G "Western National" - "Dartmouth" £17

B209B Bristol MW6G "Western National" - "Inverton" £17

**Commercial vehicles**

L15 Pack of two Forklift trucks - British Railways £8



**CORGİ**

Corgi Collectables - Buses



OM41913A Leyland PD3 'Queen Mary' Open Top, Southdown Motor Services, 197 Eastbourne via & Birling Gap £30



OM46615B New Routemaster, Arriva, 137 Oxford Circus £30

**Cars**

CR5003 3 piece Mini Collection - Speedwell blue, Radford Wicker Mini & Monte Carlo Rally Mini (list £11.99) **BARGAIN** £5



**EFE - Buses**



25711 Daimler DMS 1 Door Bus & Coach Council - Bachmann exclusive £34

28825 Leyland Titan 2 Door Prototype London Transport - Bachmann exclusive £34



30716 AEC Renown -Greater Manchester PTE - 325 to Hollow End **NEW** £25.46



38123 Bristol VRTII "City of Oxford" - "82, Aylesbury" **NEW** £29.71



**OXFORD**

Oxford Diecast - Cars



76CC001 Carlight Continental Caravan Light Grey £6  
76SET40 3 Piece Volvo Set **NEW** £12

**Commercial vehicles**

76CM009 Commer Q25 Lyons Ice Cream **NEW** £5.50



76FBB001 Fowler BB1 16nhp Ploughing Engine

No.15145 Rusty Dorset £13

76FSR004 Fowler Steam Roller No 19053 Patricia B £10



76MB003 Mercedes Actros GSC Flatbed Trailer J R

Adams £20



76MB004 Mercedes Actros SSC D-TEC Combitrailer/

Container John Mitchell £20

76SCL002 Scania Crane Lorry White £13



76SCT002 Scania EVO6 Car Transporter Quinns. £26.70



76SDF002 Shelvoke & Drewry Freightlifter British Rail

(Crimson) £10.50



76SET45 Hayton Coulthard Centenary Set £40



76SHL01ST Scania Highline Nooteboom 3 Axle Semi

Low Loader Stobart Rail £19.40



76VOL02CL Marstons Volvo FH Curtainside Lorry **NEW** £12

CC16001 Volvo FH, H.D. Ricketts Ltd, cab only, new tool £47

**OXFORD**

Oxford Diecast - Cars

76VOL03CL Volvo FH3 6 Wheel Curtainside Coopers

**NEW** £15

**Military ground vehicles**

76DT002 Diamond T980 Tank Transporter 1st Canadian

Army - Italy 1943 £20

76QLD002 Bedford QLD 1st Armoured Division 1941 £11

76QLR001 Bedford QLR 1st Infantry Div - UK 1942 **NEW** £11.50

76TAC002 TACR2 Queens Flight £8

**Motorcycles & Scooters**

76BSA009 Motorbike/Sidecar NRMA **NEW** £4

**Public Service vehicles**

76FHP001 Fordson Heavy Pump Unit NFS £10.80

76FHP002 Fordson Heavy Pump Unit London Fire

Brigade £10.50

76FS002 Ford Sierra Sapphire Nottinghamshire Police **NEW** £4

76JM023 Morris J2 Ambulance Scottish Ambulance Auxiliary Corps **NEW** £4.95

76SHP001 Sherpa Van Royal Mail (Wales) £5

76TN002 Thornycroft Nubian Major Glamorgan Fire

Service £12

76TN003 Thornycroft Nubian Bristol Airport £12.10

**1:50 Scale**

**CORGİ**

Corgi Collectables - Cars

VA10816 Ford Capri 2.8i Special, Rosso Red £21

VA11115 Land Rover Series 1, Cockpit Green, 1st road

registered Land Rover £21

**Public Service vehicles**

CC02799 Ashes to Ashes Set - Ford Granada Police and

Audi quattro - NEW TOOLING (list £39.99) **BARGAIN** £19

43JAG9004 Jaguar MkIX Black/Imperial Maroon £19

43RR001 Rolls Royce Corniche Conv. (Open) Indigo

Blue **NEW** £22

43RRP3001 Rolls Royce Phantom III SdV HJ Mulliner Black £20

CC16002 Corgi 60th - Volvo FH Curtainside "Cilla" -

Eddie Stobart Ltd, Carlisle, Cumbria, new tool £73

CC16003 Volvo FH, Curtainside Trailer, V.G. Mathers,

Inverurie, Scotland, new tool £68

CC16004 Volvo FH, Eddie Stobart - cab only, new tool £45

CC16005 Volvo FH, Step-Frame Trailer, Anderson new

tool £68

CC16007 Volvo FH, Maxwell Freight 'Liberator' cab only,

new tool £45

**O Gauge (1:43 Scale)**

**CORGİ**

Corgi Collectables - Cars

VA10816 Ford Capri 2.8i Special, Rosso Red £21

VA11115 Land Rover Series 1, Cockpit Green, 1st road

registered Land Rover £21

**Public Service vehicles**

CC02799 Ashes to Ashes Set - Ford Granada Police and

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CC16002 Corgi 60th - Volvo FH Curtainside "Cilla" -

Eddie Stobart Ltd, Carlisle, Cumbria, new tool £73

CC16003 Volvo FH, Curtainside Trailer, V.G. Mathers,

Inverurie, Scotland, new tool £68

CC16004 Volvo FH, Eddie Stobart - cab only, new tool £45

CC16005 Volvo FH, Step-Frame Trailer, Anderson new

tool £68

CC16007 Volvo FH, Maxwell Freight 'Liberator' cab only,

new tool £45

**1:50 Scale**

**CORGİ**

Corgi Collectables - Commercial vehicles

CC13779 Scania R, H.E. Payne, cab only £47

CC13780 Scania R Topline, John Hulston Haulage,

Stirling, Scotland - cab only £45

CC16001 Volvo FH, H.D. Ricketts Ltd, cab only, new tool £47

CC16002 Corgi 60th - Volvo FH Curtainside "Cilla" -

Eddie Stobart Ltd, Carlisle, Cumbria, new tool £73

CC16003 Volvo FH, Curtainside Trailer, V.G. Mathers,

Inverurie, Scotland, new tool £68

CC16004 Volvo FH, Eddie Stobart - cab only, new tool £45

CC16005 Volvo FH, Step-Frame Trailer, Anderson new

tool £68

CC16007 Volvo FH, Maxwell Freight 'Liberator' cab only,

new tool £45

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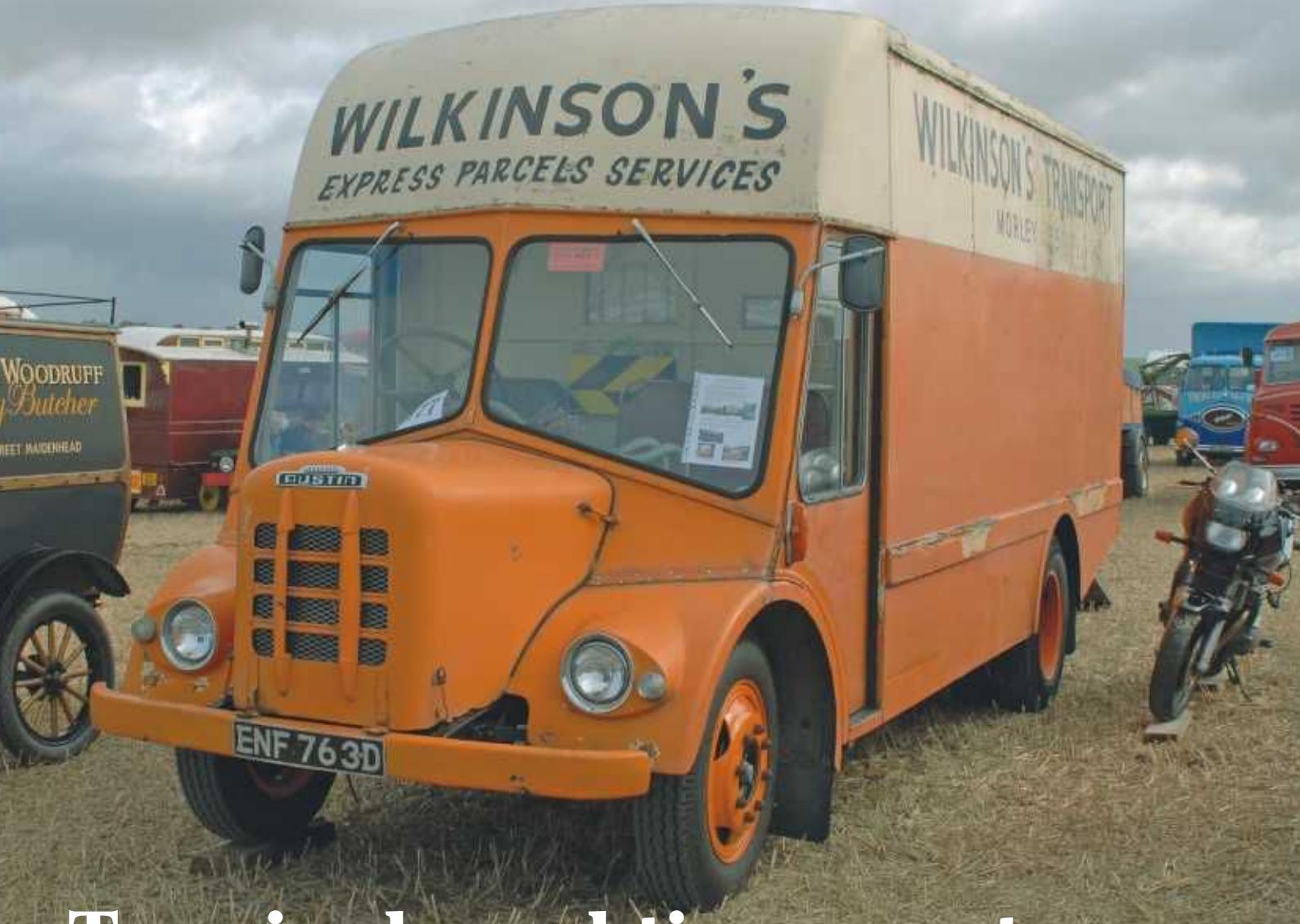
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## Terminals and times past

This photo has nothing to do with my comment this month, I just liked the subject! I took this photo of a 1966 Austin VAK100 'Noddy van' at the 2009 Great Dorset Steam Fair. They used to be everywhere back in the day, but when did you last see one? Photo Stephen Pullen.

Welcome to the March 2017 issue of *Heritage Commercials*. I'll start my comment with this month's cover story, the superb 1949 Bedford OLB owned and restored by Len Brumpton. As you'll read, things didn't go quite to plan for Bob Tuck when he went to visit, as a minor technical problem with the lorry meant the day sadly had to be cut short. I suppose some people may think this is one of the perils of producing a magazine about old vehicles, as they assume they often break down. However, this assumption is totally wrong. In the eight plus years I've been editor, and the three years I worked as a freelance contributor before that, this is the first 'breakdown' we've had. Bob says that in the decades he's been writing it's only the second time it's happened to him. And as

you'll read, it was a very minor problem, and could have happened to anybody!

This got me thinking about all the vehicles I've owned or driven over the years, and the times, in the words attributed to Rolls-Royce, when they've 'failed to proceed'. In all that time I've had a few problems, but always managed to get the offending vehicle going at least well enough to get home – except once, and that was in a car less than four days old! I was working for a hydraulic engineering firm at the time, and had been asked to deliver some small gaskets to a customer. The van was out on another job so the boss said to use his brand-new Ford – which promptly died at some traffic lights three miles down the road. It appears the mechanic who had done the pre delivery inspection hadn't noticed a loose bolt on an

electrical terminal, which had since fallen out and disappeared. The boss was livid, as you would expect, and insisted the car be recovered by the garage.

Changing the subject, I'd just like to write a few words of thanks to all of you who have sent in letters telling your stories of life in road haulage in days past – please keep them coming! As I've said before, I think that one the most important jobs we do here at *Heritage Commercials* is to record the history of this almost 'ignored' industry. So if you haven't written in yet, please drop me a line. Don't let your story go untold!

**STEPHEN PULLEN**

stephen.pullen@kelseymedia.co.uk

Stephen



## Cover story

### 06 Going full circle

Having spent all his working life involved in the road haulage industry, Len Brumpton has a huge amount of memories of the many vehicles he's driven. But when he found the time and inclination to join the preservation world, it's no surprise that the first vehicle he wanted to save was an example of the very first vehicle he drove.

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George Dowse was to give the recovery world more than 25 years of his working life and during that time, his North Shields (Tyneside) based company was to build a reputation of expertise that was second to none.



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In their way, they changed the history of road haulage and for the most part have been seen as a small element of British road transport, but the three-wheel tractor made a huge contribution to the economical and effective haulage of road freight.

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The very fine DAF 2205 owned by Laurent Dircks was featured in the March 2016 issue of HC but this is not the only classic commercial vehicle which he owns, as there are also two rare and equally fine Saurers in his collection.

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J C Bell Haulage Contractors are heavily involved in Scotland's quarrying industry. Bob Weir went to Newhouse to meet up with Gavin Bell, and check out his collection of classic tippers.

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# GOING FULL CIRCLE



**Having spent all his working life involved in the road haulage industry, Len Brumpton has a huge amount of memories of the many vehicles he's driven. But when he found the time and inclination to join the preservation world, it's no surprise that the first vehicle he wanted to save was an example of the very first vehicle he drove. Bob Tuck is given the guided tour of one classy 1949 OLB Bedford four-wheel tipper.**



**The Bedford was Len Brumpton's first lorry restoration, and was the first type of lorry he ever drove.**

**Y**ou see them here; you see them there; in fact, if you live around the Wolds of northern Lincolnshire, you can probably see them everywhere. With such a stunning paint job, the modern-day 38-strong road-going fleet of LJ Brumpton and Son Ltd are certainly a welcoming sight to behold. In November 2016, the founders Len and Linda Brumpton – plus their son Ian, who now has day-to-day control of the family transport concern – celebrated 40 years in a business which they've obviously given a huge amount of their life to.

Even when 'off duty', the Brumpton family are big supporters of the preservation world as over the last 10 years, Len has enjoyed nothing more than spending his spare time on what he describes as: "A fresh project." The guy might be self-taught but he's obviously got a huge talent for the task as his efforts have culminated in a fabulous (still growing) 16-strong vintage collection which includes 10 agricultural tractors. But when Heritage Commercials was given the choice of selecting just one of these vehicles to highlight, we knew it had to be Len's first – his 1949 OLB Bedford – which looks just as stunning, as the day it was new into service.

### **THE BEDFORD BACKBONE**

Back in '49, it was the marque of Bedford you used to see here, there and everywhere because the Luton based commercial vehicle making offshoot to Vauxhall Cars had become a big favourite with many – albeit at the lighter end of the goods carrying business. What was in short supply at that particular time were independent long-distance road hauliers, because the post Second World War Labour Government was just implementing their promise to nationalise such movement of freight by road with the creation of British Road Services. In practice this meant many vehicles (and businesses) were compulsorily purchased with their owners being almost powerless to stop this legalised form of highway robbery.

Back then (as Ian Brumpton's research has uncovered) John Henry Fretwell was doing his best to thwart this ever-growing tide of BRS. Becoming chairman of the Chesterfield sub-area of the Road Haulage Association, he gave his spare time to fighting the cause of 'Free Enterprise.'

As the history books tell us, this fight was subsequently won – in 1951 – because one of the first decisions made by the newly elected Conservative Government was to halt this tide of compulsory acquisitions. They went further by instructing that the fleet of BRS should actually be broken up and sold off in lots, so you can imagine the mixed emotions that RHA members like John Fretwell would have gone through.

Based at North Wingfield (which is just south of Chesterfield) it's believed the Fretwell business had kept legally trading because they were able to retract their business into staying within a 25-mile radius of his Derbyshire base. John obviously felt it was safe enough – and there was no threat of the Government taking the vehicle from him – to buy the brand-new Bedford MRB ↗



Photos courtesy Ian Brumpton.



The Bedford, still with opening windscreen, working on the farm in the mid 1980s. Photos courtesy Godfrey Thorpe.

940 that took to the road on 1st March 1949. Being rated as a 5-tonner, it was then the strongest version of the Bedford 'O' Series although being a longer wheelbase version (and equipped with dropside body having Pilot, twin ram, front mounted tipping gear) suggests it would have been used to carry a variety of traffic around the area.

Bedford (Vauxhall) launched this particular model in 1939 and subsequently huge numbers were made (with squared off bonnet) in both rigid and articulated form for the War Department. Bedford purists will tell you that although they looked similar, the two lighter versions of the 'O' model were actually the 'K' – built to carry 30-40cwt – and the 'M' which was rated as a 2-3 tonner. Other parts of the model code numbering denoted long / short wheelbase variants, while the OB was the bus version.

## MOVING ON

Ian Brumpton hasn't been able to discover very much about the first 34 years or so of the Bedford's life. But as we'll explain later, one thing which can be deduced is that it was obviously well looked after. It must have been well thought of because when the Plating & Testing regulations were brought in during 1968, many wagons of a certain age were simply scrapped as it was felt they weren't cost effective to be plated.

But on 28th December 1968, MRB 940 was officially certified as able to operate at 8.1-tons gross, which coincided with the original Bedford rating of being built to carry a 5-ton payload.

Such a remark will probably bring hoots of laughter from Godfrey Thorpe who now farms at Barton upon Humber. Like many others from the farming world, Godfrey grew up surrounded by Bedfords and recalls his father actually made great use of a wide assortment of this Bedfordshire made load carrier. But whether it was rigid or artic, one thing the Bedford had to withstand – especially when working in the fields – was a huge amount of overloading, so 5-tonners like MRB 940 could of course carry at least 7 or 8 tons. No wonder Bedford operators of old held them in such high regard.

This soft spot for anything with a Bedford badge on the front was apparent when Godfrey went to the small settlement of Bradley near Ashbourne in Derbyshire: "I'm sure we were looking for a horsebox," he says, "and it must have been in the early '80s – perhaps 1983."

The search had taken them to the premises of D Walker and eventually they were to discover there were a wide variety of golden oldies in storage here. Many were in various stages of restoration but that wasn't the case with MRB 940 which looked as

though it had just come off the road. "It's a guess," says Godfrey, "but it looked like it had probably been parked up in this grain store for about 10 years. It was still in the original JH Fretwell livery and looked as though it hadn't been touched since coming off the road."

Long story short is that the Bedford soon had a new owner who was very impressed when it was taken back to his home on Humber: "Once it was off the low loader, all we did was fiddle with the points; sort the petrol out and put a battery on and it immediately fired into life. And all it really wanted to go back on the road was a new exhaust that we found in the un-wanted stock at Eminox in Lincoln."

## BACK TO WORK

Although bought initially perhaps with preservation in mind, MRB 940 seemed good enough to go back to work on the farm and we love Godfrey's pictures of it doing a variety of jobs – still in its '49 JH Fretwell colours. The original versatile specification of having a long wheelbase but with a dropside body – plus tipping gear – meant for a few more years at least, the sound of the fabulous 3.5-litre, six-cylinder Bedford (Chevrolet) petrol engine could be heard – working under full load – across the Lincolnshire fields.



These photos were taken on Godfrey Thorpe's farm in August '06 before the Bedford was moved. The Pilot front mounted twin ram tipping gear is plain to see. Note that Fretwell obviously fitted electric indicators and better rear view mirrors than the original smaller ones.



Step-by-step photos  
showing the restoration  
of a Bedford!

*Photos courtesy Ian Brumpton.*



Len found that the engine was beyond saving, so a recon unit was fitted.  
*Photo courtesy Ian Brumpton.*



The Bedford O Series must be one of the easiest lorries you could ever want to get into.



The simple and functional O Series instruments.

After two or three annual harvests, time of course eventually caught up with it so it was parked up with the plan to have it fully restored – as and when time allowed. With that in mind, Godfrey was to commission the highly talented Stan Bandy to build a brand-new replacement dropside body: "Stan was a superb craftsman who used to work for Bonallack Bodies and I'm sure he came from East London. He prided himself on never using power tools and he made a terrific job on making the new body."

Putting that body back on the fully restored OLB chassis was not a task Godfrey ever got round to doing. For an assortment of reasons – as well as pressure from his normal farming 'day job' – the finished body was put safely into store while the OLB chassis was moved around until eventually it had to go outdoors and face the elements.

The good thing about being parked out in the open was it was spotted by Len Brumpton (from about 2003) on his irregular visits to Godfrey's farm to collect the likes of sugar beet. The OLB cab & chassis may not have looked much, but to Len it was like encountering a time warp. When he was a youngster in the 1950s, his parents - Jack & Bertha - were tenants on Fox Farm at Howsham near Brigg. The local



▲ Fortunately, there was a big meeting in the Brumpton yard of 'Crank Up' guys – and their stationary engines – on the day of our visit. They were able to help in getting the Bedford safely back into the garage when we couldn't start the engine.

► The restored Bedford engine. Sadly a cracked distributor cap thwarted our test drive.



haulier who picked up the milk churns in that area were the brothers Ken & Ron Barr who of course used an 'O' series Bedford for this regular collection work. So whenever young Len was around, he'd jump in beside the Bedford driver for a ride up and down the farm tracks.

When Len eventually got to an age to start wagon driving, it was – of course – an 'O' Series Bedford that he cut his teeth on for Hugh Spolton at North Kelsey. For reasons like this, the weathered remains on Godfrey's farm were to him, more than just a pile of rusting scrap. So as time passed, Len eventually broached the idea of buying the Bedford. "It looked a bit rough," says Len, "but it also seemed that it could certainly be saved."

### SIMPLY STUNNING

With the deal done, in September '06 the Bedford was back on another low loader for the short trip to the Brumpton HQ at Barnetby-le-Wold. However, unlike the last time it was unloaded after such a similar trip (during 1983) there was no chance that following a slight bit of tinkering, the engine would swing into life: "I knew immediately," says Len, "that the engine was past it."

This was to be Len's first attempt at a

restoration but it helped the cause that his transport yard had great workshop facilities and plenty of available storage space that allowed the Bedford to be worked on as and when time could be spared. It also helped the cause that Len was to make contact with John Morter of Wymondham in Norfolk: "He was to be a huge source of parts," he says, "and he even came up with a replacement reconditioned engine to replace my original one." This business: [www.vintagebedfordspares.com](http://www.vintagebedfordspares.com) is still very active supplying Bedford parts although it's now in the hands of John's son Chris Morter.

The restoration was fairly straight forward and Ian Brumpton's excellent photographs show the comprehensive progress made to the job. The shot-blasting was done in the yard, and while Len did most of the work himself (including the painting) Les Waters helped with the re-wiring while Dean Atkinson also did a fair amount of work on it. It certainly helped the pace of the project that the brand-new body (made many years earlier by Stan Bandy) could at last take its place on the back of the Bedford chassis.

The finishing touch is often the sign-writing, and making a terrific job of this task was to be Graham Bridges.

Stan Bandy built the brand-new replacement dropside body.



## ON THE ROAD AGAIN

Len recalls the OLB's first official outing was to be on the Hull to Bridlington road run: "I'm sure we managed to restore the Bedford in about two years so it might have been the '09 run when we first took it out."

For someone looking for an enjoyable vehicle to (perhaps) restore and then rally, the Bedford 'O' seems to have a lot going for it. Godfrey Thorpe points out that although just having a four-speed gearbox, the gears of 2nd, 3rd and 4th are all synchromesh so you only need to double-de-clutch when using bottom gear. Len reckons MRB is comfortable at a cruising speed of 40mph although Bedford devotees are aware that if you can find a rear axle from an OB coach, then that has a higher gear and so gives a quicker top speed.

With a very handy outside step, the cab must be one of the easiest you could ever want to get into although Len smiles when you ask about adjusting the driver's seat or steering column: "One size fits all," he says.

We were certainly looking forward to trying the Bedford ourselves and in the mid November sunshine, the wagon looked a treat. It's perhaps fitting that the Brumpton operation (and the current home for the Bedford) is alongside Barnetby railway station and in premises that were initially

owned and used by British Rail. Way back in 1949 when the Bedford started earning a crust, we feel sure that it would have been in and out of similar railway stations around North Wingfield collecting coal for onward deliveries.

However, the bad news for our day is that we wouldn't see the Bedford under its own power: "I drove it out the garage this morning and around the yard," says Len, "but it won't start up again." The fault was soon diagnosed as a crack in the distributor cap, but with no spare available, we were reliant on the Barnetby 'A' Team (man power

rather than horse power) to ease the 3-tons of unladen Bedford into a variety of pockets of sunshine. And then with even more helpers, to eventually push this lovingly burnished 68-year-old slice of Bedford history back into its garage.

However, while this incident underlined one of the 'joys' to the preservation movement, it also generated an excuse for us to come back to Barnetby. Just like the expansion of the Brumpton Classic collection, this Bedford story – incorporating some driving impressions – will be continued. Watch this space. ♦



## Specification

### Make / Model:

Chassis No:

Year:

Registration:

Engine:

Gearbox:

Gross vehicle weight:

Top speed:

Fuel return:

Body / tipping gear:

### Bedford OLB 5-tonner

OLBC 94299

1st registered 1.3.49

MRB 940

Vauxhall / Bedford 3.519-litres six-cylinder petrol 72bhp @ 3,000rpm

Bedford four-speed

8.1 tons

40mph (cruising)

10-15mpg (guessed)

Built by Stan Bandy (ex Bonallack) / Pilot front mounted twin ram

## Rare Thornycroft comes to auction

A rare Thornycroft Tartar 3-ton 6x4 (chassis no: 31622) was recently entered into one of Morris Leslie Group's Classic Auctions at the company's HQ at Errol airfield in Tayside, writes Bob Weir.

Thornycroft was well known for using descriptive and colourful names for their range of lorries in the 1930s, and the Tartar was a development of the earlier model A3. The Tartar was produced for both civilian and military use between 1938 and 1945, and the vendor believes this lorry was originally used by the Army. It is fitted with an auxiliary gearbox.

Auction Manager Keith Murray said: "The Thornycroft is not registered with the DVLA, and this will be the responsibility of the new owner. This rare and important lorry is just another example of the increasing number of historic vehicles passing through our auction house."



## New Malcolm models

Andrew Malcolm, CEO of The Malcolm Group, and Colin Prior, internationally renowned landscape photographer, teamed up to launch the latest range of Corgi die-cast models featuring Colin's iconic Scottish landscapes on their specialist equipment walking floor trailer fleet.

The limited edition model collection (see [www.corgi.co.uk](http://www.corgi.co.uk)) is made up of eight Scania R Highline tractor units, each coupled to a walking floor trailer featuring a stunning Scottish landscape as captured by Colin. These extraordinary landscapes reinforce Malcolm's environmental credentials and values by aligning itself with green imagery. The simple tag line 'Greener Cleaner Logistics

Services' clearly articulates the company ethos.

The environmental link is clear as they are especially well suited to support the bulk movement of biomass and material for recycling, as well as handling more conventional palletised freight. The Malcolm Logistics walking floor fleet also includes longer length trailers – which can carry up to 15% more than standard trailers to reduce the number of load moves required.

Malcolm's fleet of walking floor trailers covers thousands of miles across the length and breadth of the UK every day, providing travellers with welcome relief from the monotony of everyday motorway traffic.



The photo shows Andrew and Colin at The Donald Malcolm Heritage Centre, which was built by Andrew Malcolm, in memory of his father, Donald, known and respected as one of the greatest and most enigmatic businessmen ever seen in the Scottish Road transport industry.

## SEALEY CHARITY PROMOTION

Sealey have chosen to support Breast Cancer Now and Prostate Cancer UK with their new Pink Tools Promotion. This campaign features unique limited edition pink versions of some of their most popular lines and aims to raise £40,000 to split equally between the two charities.

Included in the special selection are Premier screwdrivers and socket sets, a welding helmet, an air hose, an LED3601 lamp, a pair of folding axle stands, a 3-tonne trolley jack, a multimeter and a three drawer tool chest.

These will be eye catching additions to any garage or workshop and everyone will know that they are supporting two important causes. Alternatively, you can also support their campaign by donating via the Just Giving sites:

[www.justgiving.com/fundraising/sealey-breast-cancer](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/sealey-breast-cancer)  
[www.justgiving.com/fundraising/sealey-prostate-cancer](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/sealey-prostate-cancer)

Copies of the new Pink Tool Promotion are available from your local stockist, or you can request a copy or view online at [www.sealey.co.uk](http://www.sealey.co.uk)



## Shetland Commercial Vehicle Show

The Shetland Commercial Vehicle Preservation Society (SCVPS) was set up in August 2015 with the aim of preserving and restoring commercial vehicles in Shetland. Their eventual plan is to have a permanent facility that can house the commercials, as well as educating the next generation about these historically important working vehicles.

The Shetland Commercial Vehicle Show will be Shetland's first commercial show. It coincides with the return of a 1950 Bedford OB Duple Vista Coach that spent all of its working life in Shetland. The coach will be the main attraction over the weekend.

Exhibits at the show will include trucks, buses, vans, pick-ups, tractors and stationary engines, covering a vast range of eras. Other attractions will include live music, local crafts, scale models, and tea & home bakes. The show runs over two days, 24th and 25th of June 2017, in the Cunningsburgh Show Field just south of the capital, Lerwick. Before the show officially opens there will be a road run of some of the exhibits around Shetland's capital before heading south to the show field.

Entry forms and information can be obtained by emailing [john.robinson221@icloud.com](mailto:john.robinson221@icloud.com)



Duncan Coulthard of Hayton Coulthard will be bringing his 1989 Volvo F10 to the new Shetland Commercial Vehicle Show.

Alternatively you can message them on their Facebook page - Shetland Commercial Vehicle Preservation Society. Or call the chairman, Mark Robinson, anytime after 7pm weekdays or anytime during the weekend on 01595 830220, or send a letter to:

Shetland Commercial Vehicle Preservation Society, Stroma, Olligarth, Whiteness, Shetland, ZE2 9GJ.



Robbie Leslie of Northwards in Shetland will be exhibiting a 1982 Ford Transcontinental unit, as well as a Volvo F10 currently being restored.



Main attraction! John Watt's 1949 Austin K2 Coach with Federated Industries of Aberdeen body.

## NEW BRAKE PIPE FLARING TOOL

The compact design of this new brake pipe flaring tool from Laser Tools (part number 6728) means that it is particularly suited to on-vehicle use, making it very convenient, and a real time saver. Under a wheel arch or even underneath the vehicle, its small size, light weight and robust construction makes flaring brake pipes an easy task even when access is difficult.

The set includes dies and punches for the two most common brake pipe sizes: 4.75mm and 3/16in diameter and can produce both DIN single flares and SAE double flares.

Easy to use, the device is hand-held and the flare type is marked on the cast body. A pipe stop-plug is provided and the brake pipe is inserted until it can go no further; this sets the correct length of pipe presented to the punch and ensures a perfectly formed flare. The flare



is completed simply by turning the punch into the cast body with a socket or spanner and thus compressing the pipe material. Suitable for copper, copper-nickel and steel brake pipes.

Available now from Laser Tools stockists at a typical price of £100.88 (plus VAT) — but remember to check for the best price and special offers.

More details from [www.lasertools.co.uk](http://www.lasertools.co.uk)

You can also see the 6728 flaring tool in action on the Tool Connection YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/1PzoGspNlI8>

## 2017 SHROPSHIRE TRUNDLE

The date for this year's Scammell Register Shropshire Trundle has been announced as 14th May. The event is open to all makes, shapes & sizes, and there's no judging, no cups, no concours, just an enjoyable road run in and around Shropshire! For more information contact Parry Davis on 01948 880870 or email [parrydavis@btinternet.com](mailto:parrydavis@btinternet.com)

## 4X4 EVENTS CHANGE DATES

Due to a temporary closure of the M4 at Junction 13, it has been announced that the Newbury 4x4 & Vintage Spares Day at Newbury Showground has changed date from the previously advertised 2nd April to the earlier date of Sunday 26th March.

This means that the Ripon 4x4 Spares Day and Land Rover Autojumble, which takes place at Ripon Racecourse, has had to move to 19th March to avoid the (new) 26th March Newbury date.

## LEYLAND TRUCK TRAIL

The town of Leyland in Lancashire will get a 'commercial' attraction for 2017 in the shape of the Leyland Truck Trail. The interactive trail celebrating more than 110 years of lorry manufacturing in the area will feature thirteen 6ft 'model' lorries placed at various locations around the town. Each vehicle will have its own cartoon-type 'character', and will carry a name such as 'The Comet', 'Military Martian', etc., together with information telling the story of these Leyland vehicles. The trail begins in April and will run for six months. Illustrated maps will be available in the town, and also on the internet, showing where the vehicles are located. For more information visit [www.trucktrail.org.uk](http://trucktrail.org.uk)

## WHOTT DORCHESTER RALLY

Sunday 13th August 2017 sees the third annual running day of the West Country Historic Omnibus and Transport Trust (WHOTT). This will run from 10am to 4pm at Dorchester, Top o' Town car park.

A first this year will be a link with the Hardy Society which is celebrating the 130th anniversary of his book 'The Woodlanders'. A free coach tour of sites associated with the book will take place in the afternoon with an on-board running commentary given by a local Hardy expert.

There is free parking in Dorchester on Sundays, and the rally site has a café and toilets, and is a ten minute walk from the two railway stations.

Top o' Town car park is the site of the former Bere Regis & District headquarters, garage and main works.

Entry forms and more details are available online at [www.busmuseum.org.uk](http://www.busmuseum.org.uk) or from WHOTT chairman Robert Crawley, Kalmia, Church Road, Colaton Raleigh, Devon EX10 0LW or by telephone 01395-567795, mobile 07974-567756, email [chairman@busmuseum.org.uk](mailto:chairman@busmuseum.org.uk)

## A life on the road

I've now been on the road for 84 years, 'man and boy! I'm now 87 years young, and still 'punching up the road', now in my British-made Nissan Micra S!

It all started back in 1933 with my dad Tom Fox, a long distance lorry driver for Glynn Bros, a lead manufacturer of Park Royal, London NW10.

I'd go 'shotgun' with him on long journeys all over Great Britain, staying overnight in little country pubs – even though my dad was a teetotaller! He maintained that these little pubs were best for good grub and comfy beds. And sure enough, he was right!

When I was about 13-years-old, he taught me to drive, sheet & rope, and how to maintain and care for a lorry, in order to earn a living.

I learnt the art of driving etc., on RAF and USAF Airfields in East Anglia and Wiltshire during the Second World War.

In the war years of 1939 to 1945, there were no signposts, no street lights and certainly no 'sat navs'! If you asked a local for directions they became a bit suspicious in case you were a spy! "No mate, I don't know" was often the reply. Either that or "Arrh!"

Despite this Dad always got there – eventually! There were some real country lanes to negotiate, and often some backing-up!

When I passed my driving test in 1947, I got a job driving a Ford 10cwt van, and also a breakdown truck, which was an ex Canadian Army Ford V8, left-hand-drive five-tonner. This was for a local garage and car sales, ie breakdowns and towing.

Then when I was 18-years-old, King George VI asked me if I would like to join the Army as a driver for the Royal Army Service Corps. I said, "Yes George, I'll have a go at it Sir!"

So from 1948 to 1950 I had a great time in the Army. Eventually, after square bashing etc., I got posted to Taunton in Somerset, to a Transport Unit – staff cars, Austin Ambulances, Bedford, Commer & Austin three-tonners, and Leyland & Foden 10-tonners. There was also a Humber limousine, black with a flag on the bonnet, which was used to cart to General Officer Commanding, South Western Region, on his tours of camps, barracks etc., in the South West of England. He also had two Military Policemen as escorts, and it was a top job but had plenty of bulls\*\*t!

When I told King George VI that I would be leaving the Army in 1950, he said, with a stutter, "Okay mate, thanks a lot. If you ever need a driving job I've got a nice Rolls-Royce you could drive." I said "No thanks,

I'm going to be a long distance lorry driver!"

Unfortunately my Dad passed away just a few weeks before I got demobbed out of the Army. RIP Dad.

I then went back to my old job of breakdowns, towing, delivering cars etc. One memorable day was when the 'guvnor' said I had to deliver a car to Southend, and then collect another. The delivery was an Aston Martin DB4, and I had to collect a left-hand-drive Ford Fairlane. I said "right ho, guv!" and I went along the NC road – A406 and down to sunny Southend.

Then, one evening, the boss man from my Dad's old firm called round home and offered me a job driving their new Ford ET6. I stayed with them for a few years and finished on an AEC Monarch delivering all over Britain.

I got married in 1954 and produced a son and daughter by 1956. Living in London was getting a bit too expensive, so when I was offered a job with Linton & Hirst Mfc Co, who were opening a new factory in Swindon, Wiltshire, I said we could relocate with them.

Oh boy, all expenses paid – removals, carpets, curtains etc. They even took us by coach to view the area and pick which house we would like! Me and my mate Willy Watts, picked out two houses near each other, and we drove for that firm for many years.

Imagine, a brand new three bedroom council house opposite green fields. 'Utopia, Shangri-La'! Rent including rates and water rates was three quid a week! Nearly as good as winning the pools!

I had a Foden two-stroke artic, and then a new Atkinson with a 150 Gardner – great motor! £20 plus a week and take the unit home of a night or weekend.

Willy had a wife and two kids, and I had a wife and two 'cubs'. This was the life!

But after a few years, and a new transport manager, the vehicles were put out to a subcontractor at Reading in Berkshire.

So Willy and me moved to Woodcocks Transport of Sheffield. Here we did month about days and night trunks, pulling 20tons of reinforcing steel out of Sheffield, mainly for motorway construction (M4, M5, M3) and various high-rise buildings in the west, south west and Wales. This was a great job with a very good gaffer, and a new Volvo F88 with 45ft and 60ft trailers.

But again, after a few years, it was 'goodbye again', or come and live up in Sheffield lads. We both said "Ee-by-gum, no fanks guvnor. We luv Wiltshire!"

Willy went on Bulwark tankers. I went on night trunk for Storage & Haulage of Hatfield, Herts, from Swindon to Maidstone in Kent, on contract to Reeds Paper Group.

But again, after a few months, "goodbye!" A mate, a fellow lorry driver who had started a business with two Ford box vans, offered me a job on days. So, as I was getting on a bit, I took the offer and spent a few more years on the road.

Tachos and cab kipping soon became the new gimmick that I didn't like. I had always stayed in private transport digs or little country pubs, so I left and went driving a fork lift truck in a Post Office supply depot in Swindon. Then "goodbye" again!

I then went back on the road for a while before taking early retirement at the age of 64 after five years on a Ford Transit for our local council. I also did a bit on container work with a Scania 110 for a Scottish haulier – shush!

I've not done a stroke since! No nicks or accidents in approximately 2-million miles! Only trouble is now my halo's too tight!

**Les 'Reynard' Fox**  
**87 not out – howzat!**

## REGISTRATION CORRECTION

**A**s I have come to expect from you, another first class read! Thanks for all your labours on our behalf. However, one small correction to the letter from Terry Raymont on page 19 of the February 2017 issue. OY was not a Surrey mark, rather it, together with BY, RK and VB, were much loved marks for the old County Borough of Croydon which is much missed by this old Croydonian! Hall & Co's registered office was in Croydon and it was a delight to see their red liveried trucks, with gold

fleet names, all over the borough. They had a large fleet of my beloved Guys, plus had used AECs and Bedfords over the years. They used to have two older trucks in the fleet which they rallied, an AEC and a Bedford, which, I believe, they sold and I have not seen either for years. Keep up your good work. I, for one, really look forward to each month's edition.

**Revd John L Lines MBE,**  
**Deal,**  
**Kent.**

## AN ERF FIRST

In early 1960 I was working for the ERF truck company in the repair shop, and we did not have any repair work. So, the foreman at the time asked me to get the four-wheeled 'shopping lorry' out of the yard and start taking the engine out. My apprentice and I put it over a pit and promptly removed the engine. This was a Meadows four-cylinder diesel which had been on trial. When we got it out there were all sorts of rumours as to what would be going back into the lorry – Bedford, Ford, Commer TS3 etc. We had a new rear engine mounting to fit, and new front ones, but we still had no idea what engine was to be fitted. Someone said Perkins, but that idea was scoffed at, as most of us had had dealings with the Perkins P6 and R6.

However, sure enough, a big wooden box arrived from the stores and there was the 6.354 we had heard of but not had much to do with. It was still a new product so to give it a chance we fitted it in, made up an exhaust, fitted the gearbox, prop-shaft and radiator. We then had to make up hoses for the water, and get the electrics sorted, before filling it with oil and water. Then it was the big start-up – and what a lovely sound compared to the old P6 and R6. It sounded as sweet as a nut – Perkins had a real winner there, and it sounded really right.

We then put the bonnets and front grille back on, and then took it for a test run while empty. We then tested it with a load of weights on board, and what a good

truck it was! It was then used in the works for 'shopping' and also as a demonstrator for a few years. It was then sold to a hay and straw merchant / farmer by the name of Beards, on the Cheshire / Staffordshire border. It was still working until a few years ago, and we still see it every time we go to Newcastle under Lyme on the bus, as it is parked in a hay shed waiting for somebody to give it some tender loving care and take it to a truck rally! I hope this story of ERF's first 6.354 is of interest. It was a really good addition to the firm's range of trucks, and was a good seller in various forms.

J B Simm  
Crewe,  
Cheshire

## A CRUSADER'S PAST

Like many of your readers, I was really taken with Mark Gredzinski's feature in the February '17 issue of HC because it featured the Scammell Crusader.

I noted you too are a long time fan and it was great to see another Crusader shot on your editorial page. You say you took the shot in 2014 so I thought you'd like to see the attached image which – as the registration number denotes – is the same 6x4 Scammell albeit in the distinctive colours of David Crouch's Leicestershire based recovery firm.

I took that particular shot at Burton-on-Trent in March 1991. The Scammell Owners & Enthusiasts Club had a regular early season gathering at the Bass Museum there and that was one of the many motors on show.

I note in your shot in 2014, the vehicle had a 'For Sale' sign displayed. Who knows that it may now be sporting yet another different livery.

Keep up the good job

Bob Tuck, Via email



## BRS CLARIFICATION

Without wishing to be accused of 'nit picking', I wish to clarify one point raised by Dave Bowers' interesting article on the Caledonian transport company in the January 2017 edition of *Heritage Commercials*. This regards his implication that it ran as a business called 'British Road Services (Caledonian)' while nationalised, and then, that by simply dropping the word 'British', the denationalised business continued under the same name.

Strictly speaking, 'British Road Services' was the fleet name adopted by the Road Haulage Executive for all their vehicles taken over during nationalisation between 1948 and 1951. Each operator acquired was given a unit number, the goods vehicles of the Caledonian Omnibus Company, for example, becoming unit B26. During 1950, by which time over 2300 undertakings had been acquired, merging of all these units

into about 220 'Groups' was completed throughout the UK, and those in South West Scotland became the 'Caledonian Group', coded 65B, just as lettered on the sides of the Albion SPCL van illustrated. This was a merger of about 14 units with some 16 depots as far apart as Stranraer, Kirkcudbright and Gretna to the south, Moffat to the east, and Abington to the north, with a transfer depot in Glasgow and a controlling office at Eastfield Road, Dumfries.

In February 1952, the Group strength was 195 vehicles, including nine eight-wheelers. After nationalisation in 1954, it was the new owners of some two-thirds of this fleet, led by the Alexander family, who first gave their business the new limited company name of 'Road Services (Caledonian) Ltd', now introducing the word 'Caledonian' to the title, in brackets,

for the first time. In much the same way, early in 1955 they acquired a further batch of vehicles from BRS in central Scotland, and gave this new operation the name 'Road Services (Forth) Ltd' – there had never been a 'Forth Group' in BRS days, again the name was introduced following denationalisation. The two companies duly became the principle members of the Tayforth Group.

Certain other companies of the day did, however, substitute their own names in place of the word 'British' when naming their businesses, such as Harris Road Services in Cheshire or Bartrum's Road Services of Diss come to mind – but that is a different story...

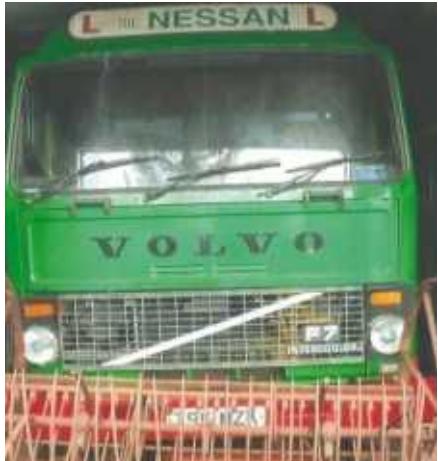
John R Mollett,  
Leeds,  
West Yorkshire

# PERKINS POWERED COMMER

I read the story by Jo Roberts about the Commer in the July 2016 issue of HC. We have a Commer Q4, RYX 449. This is fitted with a Perkins 6.354 engine, and came from England in the early 1990s, and my brother-in-law bought it in 2008. He gave it to me in 2015.

I also have a 1984 Ford Cargo 1313, a 1987 Cargo 1613, and a 1985 Volvo F7.

**Patrick Murphy**  
Co Kerry,  
Ireland.



# ROWNTREE MACKINTOSH

Enclosed is a photo of a tanker which is not usually associated with Rowntree Mackintosh. I wonder if any of your older drivers recognise it?

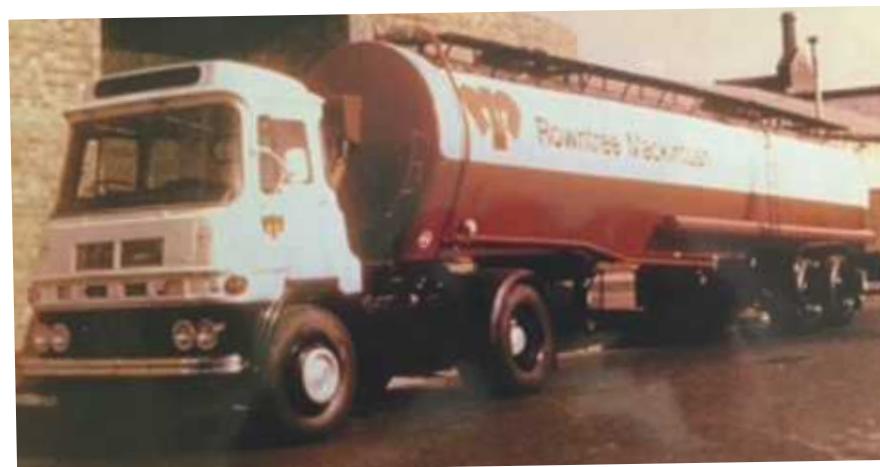
It is 5000 gallon Thompson liquid cocoa butter tanker. All the other tankers were chocolate tankers.

The tanker concerned was contracted to Rowntree Mackintosh over a seven year period, and I was the only driver to drive the said vehicle.

The vehicle was an A Series chassis with LV ERF cab, and was powered by an NH205 Cummins engine. It was taxed unladen weight, and the maximum gross weight was 32 tons, so you could not fill the tank completely full. Although fitted with baffles you still had to take care when driving. In those days the factories closed down for two weeks each year, so I had my holiday and the vehicle was MoT'd etc.

The tanker had a compressor driven by a 3-phase electric motor for pressurising the tank. The discharge pipe was interwoven stainless steel, and 20ft long at £100 per foot back then. When the seven years were up, British Cocoa Mills of Hull took over the contract.

NMU was a very large general haulage fleet, with 'A' license vehicles plus some 'C' licenses, which were contracted to



Rowntrees. The fleet was mainly made-up of Fodens and ERFs with Gardner engines, and they even had S Type Bedfords with three-cylinder Gardner engines.

NMU had depots all over the country, but when the 'A' license was discarded and everything was a free for all, Rowntrees took over.

Then the merger took place with Mackintosh and was known as Rowntree Mackintosh. It was then an in-house transport firm, with 80% own fleet and 20% subcontractors during busy periods, i.e. Christmas and Easter.

Nestle then bought Rowntree Mackintosh out and things started to change. Nestle worked on a accountancy system called ROTA (return on total assets) which means

if the company had £5million to spend, rather than invest in transport they would invest in their main core business, which brings a better return on their money. The outcome was 80% subcontractors and 20% own fleet, a complete 'u' turn.

My best times in lorry driving were the days at NMU. I was very privileged to work with some very experienced drivers - Jim Clarke, Jim Beresford, Bill Boulton and Charlie Yorke from Flowers Transport of York, who later became transport manager and also received the OBE for his contribution to road transport.

**Gordon Fisher**  
ex NMU(1953) Ltd  
Via email

## YOU'LL HAVE TO WAIT

I heartily endorse Mr Swain's comments in the January 2017 issue of HC, regarding ERF and their attitude problems.

I recall an order needed to add vehicles to a predominantly ERF fleet. The reply received was you can have the units in three weeks, but the Gardner engines will not be available for 4-5 months, all being well - incredible! So it was hello Mr Cummins - super vehicles but the oh-so British attitude of "if you want them you will have to wait." I must add it wasn't only ERF that adopted this attitude. I'm glad to say things are not like that today.

On the subject of not many British operators going abroad, a few like S&K from Barry kept up with the game with good vehicles and good kit. British company drivers are not too visible on any ferry, except S&K. As I recall, Swains of Stretton were everywhere with the 'Crossways' various logos.

Keep up the good work with the magazine as 'classic rules OK'. I hope this applies to me as I am 74, just renewed my annual Class 1, and am still up and down the track, UK and continental. Let's all 'keep on trucking' into 2017 and beyond!

**Douglas F Vick, Cheltenham Spa, Gloucestershire.**

## BUYING AT RUDDINGTON

Thanks for printing the photo of the Eastwood fleet in the February issue of the magazine, together with the story about Routh and Stevens. I have now read the story regarding Ruddington, and can add my own memories.

My family moved away from Lewes in 1953, and we went to live in Cobham in Surrey. When I left school in 1955 I went to work in a small garage in Cobham owned by a Mr Ashby. After I had been working there a few months a man came and rented part of the forecourt in order to sell cars. His name was Mr Wilkingson, and he traded in the name of D & J Autos. After he had been there for a month or two, he asked Mr Ashby if he could borrow me for a few days. I said it was alright with me, and he told me we are going to Ruddington, which at the time I had no idea where it was. My job was to check the Army trucks over to make sure nothing was missing as he was going to buy some in the auction. We got them back to Cobham with some on tow and others in the back of the larger trucks. The second time we went

he bought a Ford and a Bedford, and also some 'Tillys'. He also bought two Albion gun tractors, which were sent away and came back to Cobham fitted with crane jibs for site clearing and tree work. One of the Albions was sold to a firm in Sunbury for tree felling work. On the third trip he bought one more Albion, and also a few Standard Vanguard cars, ex Royal Navy and RAF. They all had strop dents on the wings where they had been craned on and off ships - they all sold quickly.

Also in the same issue, a letter told the story about lorries going into Ruddington loaded with motorbikes. This did happen, as we bought an Austin six-wheeled workshop truck that we found contained a Matchless 350 motorbike, complete and all greased up, a BSA with no headlight or front wheel, and a load of jacks, spanners and wheel-braces. The people in charge of the auction in 1957-58 were Walker, Hanson and Walker.

**Ivor Steggall**  
Via email

## WORKING WITH RUDDINGTON WAGONS

I found the recent articles on Ruddington very interesting, and brought back memories of when I started at Cross Bone Fertilisers, Liquid Division, Bridlington in April 1963.

I was issued with Bedford 200 gallon water tanker, as pictured in the February issue, but looking much smarter - canvas roof, with a 24ft spray boom on the back for applying liquid fertiliser.

The deliveries to farms were made by either Bedford 800 gallon tankers, or Bedford Scammell coupling artics, and one Bedford RL 1800 gallon tanker, all ex Army.

There was also an Austin Champ, used as a service van, again with canvas roof and sides. Everything was painted in a smart blue and white livery.

After a few months I was promoted to a second-hand petrol Land Rover, with a brand new ex Army engine from Warley Cross at Beeford.

At this time liquid fertiliser was produced in Batley, (the old Fred Chappel yard), and sent to Bridlington by Smith and Robinson tankers, mainly AEC Mk 3.

In late 1965, Batley was closed and a new factory built at Elvington Station, on the Derwent Valley Light Railway, by this time under the Agriform name.

By this time Hargreaves Fertilisers had taken control in a joint venture with ICI. Deliveries from ICI Billingham were by the Mk3 tankers, and an occasional ERF, KV cab, and by Hargreaves Transport tippers, mainly ERF in their orange livery, as the Scammell Trunker on the Trans Pennine Run pictured on page 42, HC February.

Peter Wheeler  
Via email

## CAN YOU HELP?

I wanted to email you after reading the Fairclough story in the January edition of Heritage Commercials. We are currently restoring a 1936 Leyland Beaver and we have the old brown logbook, and its first owner was T M Fairclough and Sons. It was registered on the 11/12/1936.

We brought the vehicle and it is green in colour, and on top of the roof is the headboard sign and you can just make out that it says 'British Road Services'. There is a Leyland Beaver in one of the photos in the article but it's a side view, so we cannot see the registration number. If anyone has any information about our Leyland Beaver, or any photos they would be lovely to see. The registration number is DLM 692.

Sophia Gowler  
Via email

I am writing regarding the request from S Greening about the rumour of trucks being sold at Ruddington depot full of BSA bikes.

I remember maybe mid 70s talking to an uncle of mine who had been in haulage and demolition in Nottingham. He had been a regular customer at the sales in the 50s/60s, and definitely knew of one bloke who apparently boasted he was going into the second-hand bike business if he could get the truck he'd just bought out of the depot before someone twigged it was full of motorbikes! My uncle also told me he'd acquired quite a few machinery parts left in

stuff he'd bought over time, one memorable piece being a complete powered circular saw with a 3ft blade. His recollection of the attitude in Ruddington at the time was they just wanted rid.

Incidentally, after laying derelict for many years, the site is now known as Charnwood Country park, a wonderful open space, and adjacent to Nottingham Transport Heritage Centre. Well worth a visit.

Great magazine Stephen, keep up the good work.

Graham Hallam  
Via email

## RUDDINGTON BONUS!

Regarding the Ruddington story and letter about the Bedford RL being filled with BSA motorbikes, I had been told of this story many times by my late uncle, Phil Dibden.

Phil used to drive for Bakers Transport of Southampton and would often collect vehicles from Ruddington after the sales. He told me of the time he collected some ex-Army Bedfords and when loading them onto his lorry, they were found to be full of motorbikes! The lots had been sold unseen and nobody would have known what, if anything, was in the back of the vehicles. I have checked with my cousin Mark, Phil's son, and he confirms this story and also said that other things were sometimes found in the back including boxes of military watches!

I have included a couple of photos of one of the lorries Phil drove for Bakers.



They show WOW 680J, a 6x4 ERF LV twin bunk sleeper tractor unit fitted with an ex-Diamond T ballast box. It's pulling an ex-Army Tank Transporter trailer loaded with a Diamond T, both from one of the Ruddington sales.

Mark Kempsey  
Wolsingham, Co Durham



## In working condition

Just to assure the editor that he's not the only one to love the 'working condition' AEC Militant featured on the front page of the January 2017 issue of Heritage Commercials, and to find it so much more soulful and historic than any number of pristine restorations.

For a long time in the field of old commercials, and probably as an artefact of them being restored 'on the firm' by hauliers in their current liveries, so many old lorries are not only factory-standard with none of the 'working look' about them, but seem so cosmetically 'over the top'.

The youngster could now be forgiven for thinking that bright red chassis and

wheels, along with excessive coach-lining, and with cabs and bodies in equally vivid hues was how things like Bedford O-Types looked in their working times, and that all old commercials were flatbeds. Has anyone at all preserved an old NHS Mass X-Ray bodied Leyland Beaver in original condition, for instance?

Those of us fated to have a few more decades under our belts of course know differently regarding how the old stuff looked in working clothes.

What do others think?

Nigel Stennett-Cox  
North Walsham

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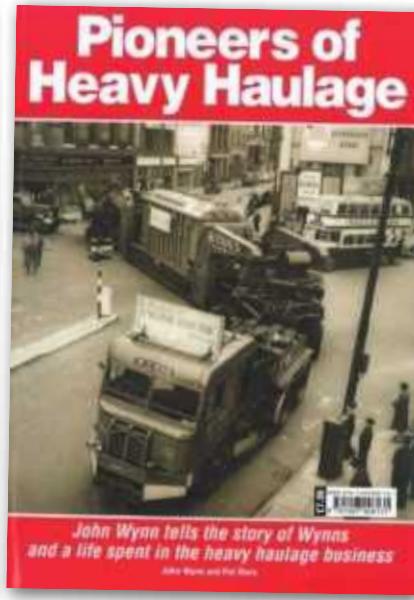
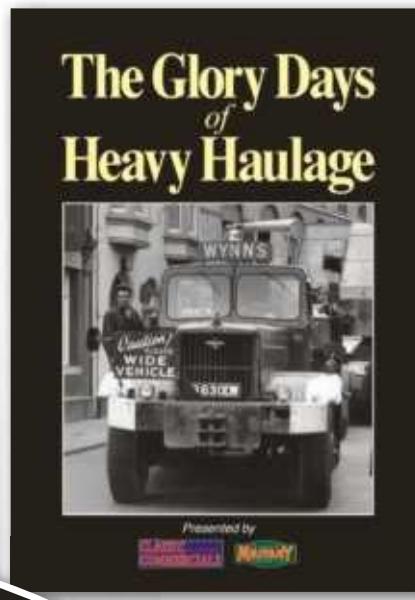
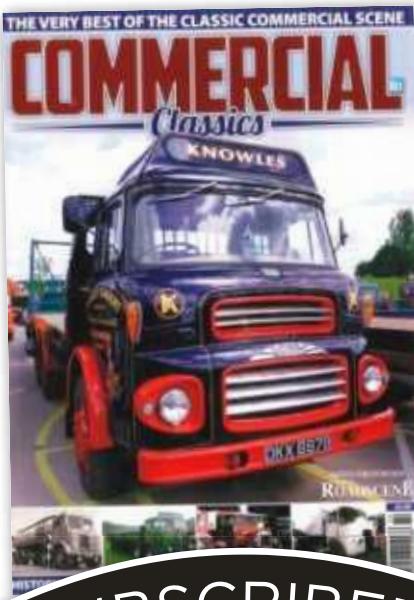
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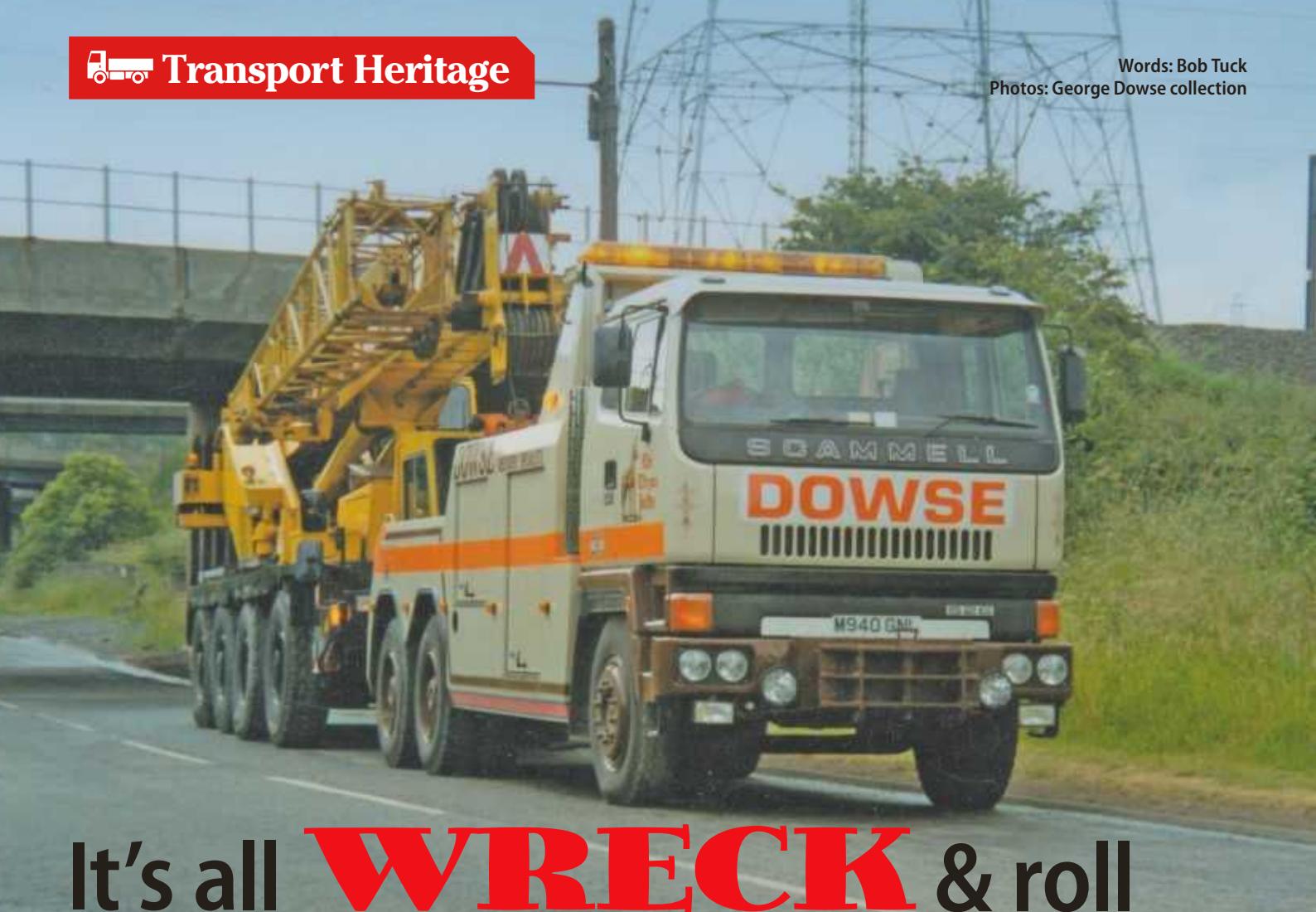
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# It's all WRECK & roll

This Scammell S26 was the last big recovery vehicle which George built and then ran. Named 'Trojan Horse' it was featured in HC April '13.

**George Dowse was to give the recovery world more than 25 years of his working life and during that time, his North Shields (Tyneside) based company was to build a reputation of expertise that was second to none. Doing some of the hardest jobs you could imagine required all manner of both innovation and tackle, so no surprise that along the way, George also used all manner of motors. Bob Tuck – an unashamed fan of the Dowse operation – looks back at some of their 'Iron Horse' Specials.**

**I**t's sometimes strange that we often take for granted the smallest things which in some people's eyes are classed as being a luxury. After spending a huge chunk of his working life just waiting for the phone to ring, George Dowse can now go to bed on a night and know that the next eight hours or so will pass (probably) without him being awoken.

It's now 17 years since the Dowse family – George; his wife Pat and their son Scott – decided that operating cranes would allow for a more 'normal' working life. And while many of the Dowse customers of old mourned their decision (even now George still hankers to get back involved) the turn of the Millennium saw the highly respected Dowse recovery fleet scattered to the wind.

George had spent more than 25 years accruing all manner of recovery expertise. I must confess that having witnessed George at work, yours truly is one of the many admirers of what he could do. Of course, in those

earliest of days – like many others – George had to make do and mend with the most basic of tackle. But in having a sharp enough mind as to how a particular recovery should be undertaken, George and his team were to show time and again why they were rated as one of the best.

## INTO THE TRADE

George was to leave school at the age of 15 and while he had little in the way of qualifications, he had already demonstrated something of a practical flair that was to come in very handy: "Around here in 'Shields,' he says, "from school you normally went into the coal mines; the ship yards or – if you had any brains – you got a job at the big engineering concern of Parsons."

In the early 1970s there was a lot going on around North Shields – at the mouth of the River Tyne – and the youngster got himself a job as a panel beater with Rockcliffe Coachworks: "I'd always fancied being a car

mechanic," he says, "but no one would take me on. Although ever since I was about 13 – when I got my first spray gun – I'd been painting cars at home so I could obviously do that."

He was so good that in 1972 (and aged only 18) he left to set up Dowse Coachworks doing the same sort of car repairs and accident work that he'd learnt his craft with. For premises, he built a shed on a strip of waste land that he leased from the local council after they'd pulled down some old houses. Next door to what was then Smiths Ship Repairs, this (since extended) part of Dock Road has been the Dowse HQ ever since.

To get extra work, it was suggested to George he should invest in a recovery vehicle. And like many others at the time, his 'first' was a Series I Land Rover sporting a manually operated Harvey-Frost crane: "I was told I should ask to join the local Police's call out list," he recalls. "And as soon as I

George Dowse at the wheel.



In the mid 1980s there had been a blockage at a very old sewer waste outlet, and this Magirus-Deutz eight-wheeler gully sucker had been sent to clean it out. It managed the job but on trying to get back across the beach at Whitley Bay it got stuck in the sand. Sadly the tide came in and out before the Dowse crew could get it winched out and it was a bit of a mess. The Dowse Foden got bogged down and it too had to be winched out by the Leyland Roadtrain. George rated the RL Bedford also seen here but only after they removed the original Bedford petrol engine and replaced with a Leyland 400 diesel and five-speed box.





George built this 4x2 Atky as a conversion from a 6x2 Atkinson Leader tractor unit which had the 250 Cummins engine and ZF gearbox. It was equipped with recovery gear from an ex American military 969 Diamond T. It lasted less than a year before a strange fire in the cab gutted the vehicle.



When George first saw this Foden eight-wheeler he thought 'Wow'. Fitted with a Brockhouse torque-converter, it was to be the transmission which was the greatest sore point to it. It ended its days when cut up and the rear half joined up to the front of an ex Derek Parnaby ERF tractor unit.



This is the JD White Demag TC4000 crane which George recovered on the A62. He also pulled it from Sellafield in West Cumbria to Birkinhead as an urgent job had to be done there. The crane had another engine to work the crane. It's termed to be 16 x 8 x 14, in that of the 16 wheels, eight are driven and 14 can steer. It weighs about 96 tons in this form.

did, the calls just seemed to keep coming in." What he learnt was although there were many other (bigger) garages on that Police list, not everyone would turn out at any hour. So unless the accident occurred on say a 9am-5pm weekday, there weren't a huge number of takers during unsocial hours. And if it was a Friday – or weekend – night, then you can bet only George Dowse might answer the phone.

This approach of being contactable – and then turning out – built up his credibility as did the investment in a 'fleet' of motors. His first big motor was a '50s Leyland Beaver tractor unit that had started life with Esso but had passed to showman John Manders: "We put a Weaver crane on that," he says. An ex military Austin K9 was bought in chassis-cab form – as a non-runner – but after digging into a shed at Cramlington, an ex military OY Bedford sourced a suitable body for it.

In days of old, the recovery guys learnt that investing in gear had to be a measured process and the simple measure was: the cheaper the better. However, if you can

then save the day with that ancient tackle, then your credibility (and extra work potential) will soar. George recalls that one such incident in particular got him going: "We got a call from Gateshead Police one Saturday night who were at panic stations because a bus had turned over near Swalwell Cricket Club and the Fire Brigade were worried that folk may be trapped inside. We went down with the Beaver and did the job and people were literally over the moon with the recovery."

### BE PRO-ACTIVE NOT RE-ACTIVE

Like any other trade, there's always been a lot of competition in the recovery world. There's also been a lot of camaraderie and he speaks very highly of the early help and guidance he received from John Rogers who had formed Unity Garage of Leicester: "We spent one weekend with him just talking about the job and how best to get on. He told me about getting involved with all the various recovery clubs but the best advice he gave me was

about going out & knocking on doors to introduce myself. He was a strong believer in being pro-active to establish yourself with potential customers rather than just being re-active to call outs."

Such a suggestion prompted George to introduce himself to some of the North-East's big crane operators and the subsequent visit to JD White's on Teesside was to bring all manner of crane recovery work – in all parts of the country. Not many breakdown folk could handle huge mobile cranes but he was to invest in a 6x6 ex military Leyland Martian which could certainly pull its weight: "All you did was drop it into bottom box and it would pull forever – but you had to keep your eyes away from the fuel gauge."

Fitted as standard with a Rolls-Royce petrol engine, even now he can cringe when he considers its consumption: "Whenever we went to a filling station to fill the tank up," he says, "people used to come and watch as they couldn't believe how much fuel it used to take."

This was called the 'Erfod' because it is the front of an ERF and the back end of the Foden eight-wheeler.



In the mid '80s George began buying all-terrain cranes – he highly rated the French-made PPM Potain Poclain Manutention.





This Martian did well but even fonder memories are recalled about an 'H' reg six wheel Scania 110 Super that George found in the JD White yard: "It used to pull their big tower crane and although it was just parked up, I sensed it could be just the motor for us." And it certainly was.

In 1976, George had met his wife to be Pat, and the Dowse business was set to steadily expand. The big Scania was to become their flagship and built into a personalised spec' it was to show its true colours by recovering – you've guessed – one of JD Whites cranes. "I'm sure their Demag TC4000 weighed something like 96 tons and it had broken down on the A62 near Oldham. It had been stuck there a couple of weeks as the two back diff's had gone and Whites couldn't find anyone to drag it home. When I went there the driver just told me to go back to Tyneside as he reckoned the Scania could never pull such a weight – but of course, it did."

The job wasn't easy and George recalls one particular climb where innovation had to be used: "The crane was too heavy to travel back on the M62 so we had to stay on the old



The progress of George's great S24 'Iron Horse.' The top photo shows it being tested by Leyland / Scammell as a prototype. The bottom photo shows it when up for sale at Paul Bridges at Birmingham. In the middle photo it is giving a hand to Pickfords heavy haulage who wanted a double-head on Tyneside (a regular occurrence).

roads. At one point I knew the Scania was about to fail, but I'd talked to the crane driver about this steep bit of the route. He said he could put the crane into front wheel drive – but only for a very short stretch – and it was this combined effort that got us over the top."

## MADE TO MEASURE

John Rogers was to introduce George to Norfolk-based Steve Young who was to become a close contact in producing recovery vehicles to a design he really wanted. Over the years, the Dowse fleet has included all sorts of ex-military hand-me-downs that have eventually been replaced by more modern vehicles. However, that was only after they have been stripped of things like their Garwood winches which gave a huge amount of extended service.

Life can often be a case of trial & error and one particular error he is still rather sad about is a smart Foden eight-wheeler which just didn't come up to scratch: "I'm sure I bought it as a chassis cab through Wreckers International. It came with a 250 Cummins and a Brockhouse torque convertor transmission. Being a cancelled export order it was built as left-hand-drive and when I first saw it, I thought: 'Wow' But it turned out to have a gremlin in the transmission and probably only did about 3mpg so it proved to be a big disappointment."

This Leyland Roadtrain started life with the Tyneside haulage concern of Hornes. George recalls they did a lot to it and it proved to be an excellent workhorse.



In the end, major surgery saw the Foden cut up with the transplanted back end being joined to the front of an ERF tractor unit that he'd bought from Derek Parnaby: "Now that proved to be a good wagon – we called it an Erfod."

An even better motor was bought simply because George fancied a Magirus-Deutz: "The main guy in the UK for these was Paul Bridges at Birmingham but the prices on his advert in Commercial Motor seemed a bit high. When I spoke to him on the phone he told me to come down and have a look at what he had and I ended up buying something special."

George only needed one look at the six-wheeler that looked a bit like a Leyland Landtrain, but was actually mostly Scammell S24: "The Scammell guys of Chris Sawyer and Glynn Rees later told me it had a Mark I Contractor frame; Himalayan hubs; Contractor bogie – with 20 ton axles; Cummins / Fuller driveline; Alder front axle and Bathgate made cab. It looked about 4-5 years old and while it seemed to be a prototype, it didn't seem to have done much. The price was right and I knew it would do us well so I drove it home."

Subsequently named 'Iron Horse' and registered SCN 779Y, Steve Young was to stretch it a bit although the installation of the recovery equipment was done at the Dowse workshops with the job taking about eight months: "The winch we fitted to it came from a Thornycroft Antar that was being scrapped." And what a performer this combination proved to be.

## ANY THING – ANY TIME

By the mid 1980s, the Dowse recovery business was growing so well that George decided to come out of the bodywork repair side of things. Our man adopted a high degree of foresight in the tackle he bought and recalls early on asking for gear which could slew round to pull in a variety of directions. They were also amongst the first to begin using the 'Whale Tail' spectacle lifts: "The Police thought that it was great that we



This Volvo F88 was bought new by an operator on the Continent for Circus work before coming to the UK. Given the name 'Crazy Horse', it was highly modified for recovery work, being fitted with Boniface equipment. George recalls it was another good servant.

could recover say two cars from the same accident. We'd pull one onto the flat back and then we'd unfold the spectacle lift so that the other one could be transported away."

Such a routine may be commonplace now, as are the use of under-lifts: "I remember how people thought we were crazy with that first under-lift but bus operators in particular soon appreciated how easy – and damage free – they could be."

George smiles when he explains the term of 'wrecker' which he says was imported from the USA: "They used to say that when the recovery guys arrived – 'Here comes the wrecker' – because they'd always wreck the outfit during the recovery."

The Dowse team prided themselves on causing as little extra damage as possible but using the likes of air bags to steady the descent of a recovered vehicle was always very slow. Again, in the late 1980s the business saw the first Dowse mobile cranes brought into service: "I soon realised that an all-terrain crane could quickly and easily recover a vehicle that was say down the embankment of a motorway. It meant roads could be opened up for use far quicker than

if things had to be slowly winched out."

George may have had some good tackle but it was having 'nous' that impressed me in January 1989 while I was still a Police Officer. Called to an incident in a side street of Skelton, Cleveland, I came across a cement mixer which had fallen into a hole that had been created when the road underneath had just collapsed. The driver apologised for the delay in any action but he said they had called out a specialist – 50 miles away on Tyneside – to do the recovery.

In fairness it didn't take that long for George to arrive with his stunning S24 Scammell 'Iron Horse.' What was disappointing was how easy the duo made the recovery appear. I expected wheel spin; sparks flying and a bit of chaos as the Scammell dragged the mixer out but nothing like that happened.

Instead, George pulled out the winch rope and routed it round the mixer chassis in such a way that as well as pulling, it would also lift the vehicle at the same time. Instructing the driver to keep the vehicle brakes on until it had reached the road meant the winched recovery took George just a few minutes and was so low-key.



The Dowse business also used smaller transporters for car work. George recalls getting good service from a variety of small Mercs, which he reckoned were comfortable and reliable - and Ford Cargo units. The transporters got all over the UK and even into Europe.



**Left:** George expanded his crane / Hiab equipped fleet to around 25 different vehicles. **Right:** This is the specialist Scammell S26 winching crane which George recently built. He's since sold it to a specialist operator on the west coast of Scotland for a variety of roles.

## LOOKING BACK

Like any other guy involved in this particular trade, he has accrued masses of vivid memories – and a boat load of photographs – of the various accidents he's been to. But when we ask what the most satisfying job he ever undertook was, he tells us of a call at 11.45pm on a Friday night: "I thought it was a crank call at first because a problem had occurred with a company that was burrowing a pipeline under the River Tees which in turn would feed natural gas to the Enron power station which was then under construction."

When the tunneling set-up stuck, no-one had any idea who could help but once George (and a trio of his biggest winch-equipped wreckers) got involved, then the situation was soon resolved: "They made a steel wall of piling bars so we could tie the trucks down and with the three of them winching in concert, I'm sure we were pulling for something like 15-20 minutes before the pipeline suddenly came free. That was an incredible thing to witness. This job lasted another couple of days but it also got us involved in other pipe-line winching work."

It was probably in the late '80s / early '90s that the Dowse recovery business was at their peak. They only ran say 10 recovery vehicles (their crane / Hiab fleet got up to around the 25 mark) but it was their expertise which

shone through. Involved in all manner of high profile incidents (George recalls an accident involving the coach carrying the pop-group 'Bucks Fizz' as being all over the media) they were probably at the top of their particular tree. However, as the '90s progressed, all manner of changes were sweeping through the industry and of course the Police call-out system. Competition was also growing and rate cutting saw some Dowse customers change their allegiance to save cash.

George is totally philosophical about the eventual decision to end this part of the family business and stresses the recovery game is a hard one to make a living with: "It can easily burn you out," he admits. Not knowing when the phone might ring generates stress as does the phone ringing too much. Keeping staff both busy and happy is often hard and while many guys have given a great deal to the Dowse operation, George wants to mention Kevin Whitelaw: "He joined us originally as part of the Yop Scheme – Youth Opportunities – and he did extremely well for us."

Sadly, we don't have the space to totally catalogue the many vehicles which have passed through George's hands. We did feature one of his last wreckers – M940 GNL, the very special Scammell S26 which is now owned & operated by Turners of Sedgefield –

in Heritage Commercials April '13 issue but we ask him what his ideal recipe for a great recovery vehicle would be: "It would have a heavy-duty Scammell chassis and rear bogie," he says. "I've always liked the 'Big Cam' Cummins engine which started out as a 290 and this would drive through a Fuller box – ideally a 15-speed. It would be fitted with an electric Telma retarder and perhaps a Volvo F88 cab but I know the standard under-lift gear would come from Boniface - while I've always liked roller shutter doors for all the tackle boxes."

Although George has left the recovery world (he's still available as a consultant of course) he still enjoys creating specials. He recently built – and subsequently sold to an operator in Western Scotland – a massive eight-wheel ex DROPS Scammell S26 that had purpose made crane / winching gear on board.

His mind still fancies building yet one more challenge of a machine before he retires (perhaps into the Classic Car scene) so don't be surprised if you see the Dowse name emblazoned on say a highly-modified Foden eight-wheeler having some military heritage to it.

It's obvious that if you give your heart & soul to the heavy recovery world then it's a business that won't let you go - especially if your name is George Dowse. ♦

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# Mechanical Horse

Part 1

In their way, they changed the history of road haulage and for the most part have been seen as a small element of British road transport, but the three-wheel tractor made a huge contribution to the economical and effective haulage of road freight. Mike & Julie Blenkinsop look at their history and meet a man who doesn't miss that fourth wheel!

In Victorian and Edwardian England, local cartage was dominated by a four-legged equine animal until the 1930s, when it was replaced by its petrol-powered successor, the 'Mechanical Horse'.

It must have been the marketing name of the decade; to come up with a suitable description which epitomises the actions of the device, but also a name that would trip off the tongue for nearly a century. The term 'Mechanical Horse' deserved an award.

For a glimpse into the world of three-wheeled truck ownership, we met up with David Warren, his wife Alison, his kids, Matthew and Adam, and his parents, at the annual road run known as the Tyne Tees. The run, the biggest single gathering of commercial vehicles in the north east of England, starts from Stockton-on-Tees on the first Sunday morning of June, passing

through rural parts of Durham and ending up at South Shields a few hours later; it was in Bent's Park that we caught up with the family, deckchairs placed, enjoying the blue sky and gentle North Sea breeze.

David has had his Scammell Scarab for 13 years. Although the plate would lead you to believe that it was born in 1964, it hides its age well, as it is really a 1958 model despite its 1964 suffix 'B' plate. It had spent its early life in the protected environment of the Leyland factory, working as a shunter. It acted as a 'gopher' running around the interior, picking up trailers and distributing them around the factory.

When you own a Scarab, the great temptation is to restore it into the most popular and well-remembered livery of its type, that of British Railways, but David has great reservations about this, as, although

not a purist, he felt pulled towards putting it back into its original Leyland factory livery. It currently is in the colours of the Scammell demonstrator which he saw on a works film from the 1950s. For the moment, the little Scarab sports a generally white/ivory finish with red detailing and is pulled along by a Perkins 4.203 diesel engine, mounted longitudinally behind the driver's cab. The milometer shows 6,079 miles, which is entirely feasible knowing its works history. The radiator sits where you would expect to find the vehicle's fuel tank.

With protection from the HCVS north-east marshals looking after safety on the Tyne-Tees run, we were allowed special permission, during a refreshment break, to move the Scarab to show its best features. A crowd gathered as this was now the only vehicle on the park which was moving.

David Warren with his pride and joy; a 1958 Scammell Scarab.



## AUTOMATIC COUPLING

The Scarab is fitted with a clever automatic trailer locking-mechanism. To appreciate this working David performed a flawless un-lock and re-couple operation, after demonstrating the action of having to chock the trailer wheels to stop the tractor pushing the trailer across the field. Normally working off a dock, the trailer would have been up against a hard surface, so would not have moved. Alternatively, a heavily-loaded trailer parked in the open would also have not been pushed back, but to get the trailer up, off the ground and into the coupler would require a good thump from the tractor unit for the coupler to engage. There was a good degree of driving accuracy involved to allow the tractor to mate with its trailer and we watched as the trailer shot up the ramps and slipped over the locking pins, whilst folding its wheels in underneath the front boards of the trailer.

Examining the underside of the vehicle, we noticed that all the recently-fitted wood bed was sitting on newly-painted metal which bore the logo 'Dorman Long-British Steel' along its length; the same company which provided the steel work for both the Tyne and Sydney Harbour bridges, although the black gloss paint made the words difficult to read.

David admits the trailer isn't right yet, as it is fitted with 10.50-16 wheels where it should be on 10.50-13s. A Bedford TK was its last tractor, hence the 16 inch wheels, however the correct 13 inch wheels are difficult to source. He has also added a Scammell of Watford metal plate to the rear of the trailer which he points out isn't original, although it does help people understand the heritage of this vehicle at events, so we will give him that one and hey, it looks good, although we are sure that the purists will be unhappy about that.

There will be more on David's Scarab later. Although we are featuring a particular Scammell here, we have to go back a few years before its appearance to appreciate the background history which inspired its development.

## REAL HORSEPOWER

The actual, living, breathing, hard-working horse was the motive power for most of the transport up to the twenties, when the internal combustion motor was really beginning to make an impact on society, although trucks had been developed from ten years before, but generally for the out-of-town deliveries. In the city, nothing had replaced the versatility and the tight turning-circle of the horse and cart, but mechanical forces were at work to engineer a device to replace man's very best friend...





David and his wife Alison; both enjoy having the Scarab in the family.



The trailer's metal chassis structure shows the local famous manufacturer Dorman Long.



An early Karrier Cob helps a horse and heavy cart with the aid of a tow-rope in this period photograph. Picture Courtesy Ian Crowder, Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway.



▲ The Southern Railway Mechanical Horse, three-ton tractor.

◀ The Scarab's Perkins 4.203 diesel engine.



Before that changeover period, the horse pulled the street trams, the buses, the mail coach and the taxis. Heavy shire horses had pulled the drays laden with beer-barrels for the breweries, a practise used for promotional purposes until quite recently, notwithstanding the million-plus horses which served and sadly, died, serving soldiers in 'The Great War'. A horse could generally be expected to work for around five hours per day, although it is certain that many worked longer than this. At 4mph, it could cover 20 miles in a day pulling a loaded cart. At one point, the LMS railway company had 18,000 horses on its inventory!

Scammell would probably be the first name for those who remember the three-

wheelers, although the names of Napier and Karrier lurk in the background. If the name of Napier rings no bells, it does have to be seriously considered in this 'horse' story. D Napier and Sons, the quite famous car and aero-engine manufacturer, made three prototype 'mechanical horses' in 1931, which were derogatorily known as 'The Mountain Goat' as the workforce who built them, were very focussed on building quality racing cars or aero engines and felt that building a three-wheeled wagon was not quite 'their bag', but, Scammell saw the opportunity and seized it, buying up the idea and patenting it. This line of interest can be followed up in *Vintage Roadscene's* August 2016 edition, where there is a very good historical piece by Nigel Paine.

## RAILWAY USE

It is believed Napier had the original idea, but Karrier was already in talks with the London Midland and Scottish Railway (LMSR) managers who were desperate for a solution to moving parcels and small goods around their yards and into the suburbs for local deliveries. The problem was that something mechanical had to be invented which would directly replace the horse, but which could initially mate with the existing 30,000 carts without also having to design a completely new trailer system. By removing the shafts off the horse-drawn trailers, normally attached to the horse's pulling tackle, a mechanical device would need to be brought in to couple directly with these old cartage trailers; the Karrier 'mechanical horse' was the answer.



This trailer was last hauled by a Bedford TK, so is on the wrong size tyres for a Scarab unit.



A February 1955 period advertisement from the Commercial Motor extolling the virtues of the Scarab's turning circle. Courtesy of 'The Commercial Motor' Magazine.

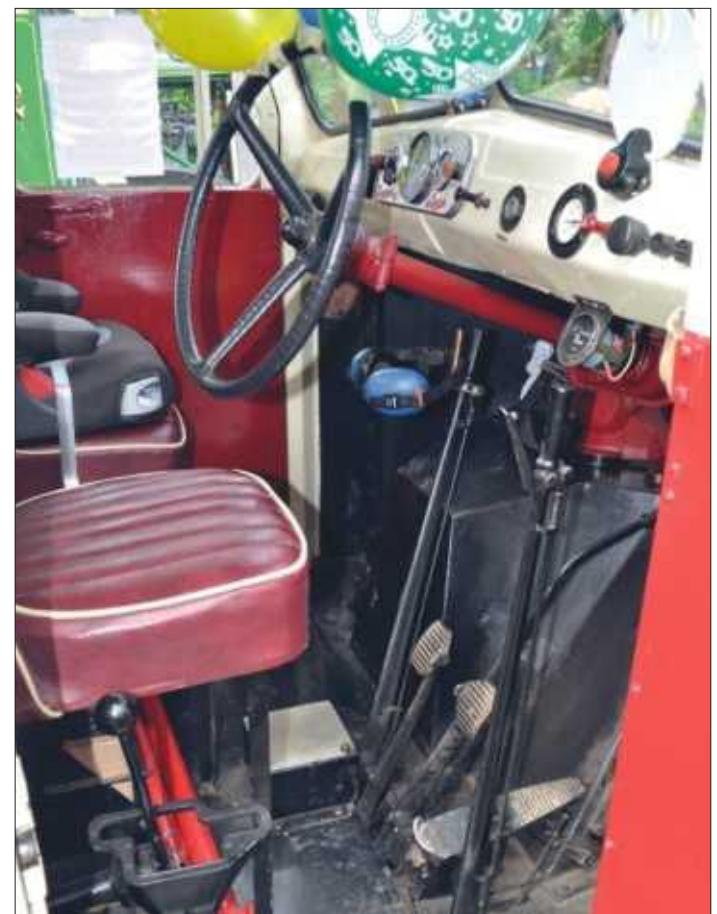
Picture courtesy Frank Bashford via David Warren.



David's Scarab as rescued by Frank Bashford.



**Left:** An under-trailer view of the landing wheels and coupling rollers.  
**Right:** The trailer landing wheels fold up and back as the coupler grabs the trailer mechanism.



The internal cab layout of David's Scammell Scarab.

Contemporary photographs show a typical, wooden, four-wheel cart being dragged around by a 3-ton Karrier tractor. The front trailer wheels were lifted by a device which gripped the front axle, raising it clear of the ground, but it required a driver performing a manual operation to achieve this. Funnily enough, the early Karrers were often used to assist a horse-drawn cart up a steep hill using a tow-rope!

Although we are specifically dealing with David's Scammell three-wheeler here, we have to acknowledge the very important role played by both Napier and Karrier, in effect, inventing the three-wheeled tractor; Napier with their 'Mountain Goat' and Karrier with their two-ton 'Colt', powered by a Jowett 7hp flat twin-cylinder engine.

This Colt was the first of three models, the others being the 'Cob' and the 'Cob Six' in the very early thirties, developed in association with the LMSR company on the west side of the Pennines. Later these were offered with stronger Coventry-Climax motors and were upgraded to 'Major' status; the Cob becoming a four-tonner, then a 6-tonner. Only three Cobs are believed to have been saved from the total output of both the Huddersfield and later, Luton factories; a move undertaken when the company was taken over by the Rootes group.

### SCAMMELL DESIGN

Meanwhile, Scammell had the same idea on their drawing boards, their chief engineer, Oliver D North, being the man behind the

solution. They continued to develop their plan with the London and North Eastern Railway (LNER) company on the east side of the Pennines. However, they took the concept one step further with an automatic coupler/un-coupler making pick-up-and-drop, a procedure undertaken without the driver having to leave his seat, utilising a simple lever-pull inside the cab to release the trailer. Meanwhile, the old carts couldn't withstand the new 'high speeds' of the powered 'horse' and frequently fell apart on the rough roads.

It is generally believed that Scammell were the first people to market their trucks under the 'Mechanical Horse' name, Karrier were initially calling their range 'Freighters'. ♦

Continued next month.



# *A tale of two SAURERS*

Laurent's two Saurers and his DAF 2205. The DAF was featured in HC back in March 2016.

**The very fine DAF 2205 owned by Laurent Dircks was featured in the March 2016 issue of HC but this is not the only classic commercial vehicle which he owns, as there are also two rare and equally fine Saurers in his collection.**

**L**aurent was born in the Netherlands and grew up there, so it is hardly surprising that he was keen to own and restore the DAF. However, a holiday in Switzerland during the summer of 1990 proved to be the first time that he encountered a Saurer lorry and they certainly made a lasting impression. "That first trip was followed by more family holidays in Switzerland and little by little I found more about Saurer lorries, the company and its history. I collected various brochures, learned that the lorries were no longer made and later discovered the Saurer Club, which I joined. The Club organises the Saurermeeting, an annual gathering of classic lorries from all over Europe, and in 1999 I attended this event for the first time."

"Since 2002 I have arranged my holidays in Switzerland to coincide with the Saurermeeting and help with the

preparations, and my dreams of one day owning a Saurer of my own continued. At the meeting in 2003 I saw a vehicle which I could actually afford. This lorry was a Berna D290F which had been part of the Coop fleet, one of the largest Swiss supermarkets, and it looked to be a sound vehicle. A deal was agreed and the owner prepared the Berna for export, and a week later I drove it back to the Netherlands."

"Although the lorry was in good condition there were still some things which needed to be sorted out. It had to be prepared for the Dutch MOT test and needed some adaptations, and as work on the lorry could only be done in my spare time it was December 2005 before it was ready for the road"

"In the meantime I had met my Swiss girlfriend Franziska, and I moved to Switzerland in February 2006, but before making the move the Berna was sold. As I

was now living in Switzerland I was keener than ever to find a Saurer and I asked a friend if he knew of anything suitable which was for sale. Later he sent me a photograph of the front of a tractor unit with a sleeper cab which was for sale in the east of Switzerland. It was privately owned and having arranged a visit I learned that it was 6x4 tractor unit, which was very rare. That made the vehicle very interesting and I made a couple of further visits and took the Saurer for a test drive. The owner had bought it purely as a hobby but as he had his own company to run he didn't really get much time to use the Saurer. He had decided that it would have to be sold and at that time a lot of Saurers were being sold to the former Yugoslavia. He really wanted the lorry to stay in Switzerland and I must have convinced him that I would find it a good home as on the second visit he agreed that I could buy the lorry."

Laurent's first classic lorry was this Berna D290F.



The 1974 Saurer 5DF in its working days for Sauvin Schmidt. Photo Richard Voirol.

## BUILT TO ORDER

"This Saurer 5DF 6x4 tractor was not a standard vehicle but it was built to a customer's request using a tipper chassis and a standard sleeper cab. It was fitted with a Saurer D2KT six-in line 330hp turbocharged engine paired with an Allison HT70 automatic gearbox. The tractor was also fitted with a 10,000Kg winch which was used to tow railway wagons on to the low-loaders. The completed lorry was delivered in September 1974 to the specialist transport company Sauvin Schmidt SA in Geneva. In 2009 I met Richard Voirol, who was the last Sauvin Schmidt driver to work with the Saurer, and he was kind enough to provide me with some additional information. Apparently in the summer of 1988 further adaptations were made. A new cab was fitted, a 1978 model with a black plastic grille, large rubber fenders on the front end, a higher windscreens and a few other minor details. The Allison gearbox was also removed and replaced with a six-speed ZF WSK gearbox, and newer back axles with stronger wheelhubs were also fitted. The Saurer then remained in use until July 11, 1996, when it was sold. After that it was used by a company which transported construction equipment and exported vehicles to

Yugoslavia and Albania, and in 2000 it passed to the chap I bought it from."

"I bought the lorry in April 2007 complete with a fresh MOT, but dealing with 'classic' vehicles in Switzerland is a little more complicated than the UK. To be able to obtain a 'classic registration' a vehicle has to be technically and visually in very good condition and in an original state. Such vehicles are not allowed to work and can only be driven for private use, but vehicles that qualify only have to have an MOT every six years and there is no Swiss heavy vehicle road charge to pay, although the maximum mileage is restricted to 3000km per year. Unfortunately, although the 6x4 was in pretty good condition it was in need of some work to the cab and the fifth wheel to comply with the requirements."

"However, the 'classic season' was approaching and Franziska and I wanted to use the Saurer and get to know it. The first job was a full service, changing all the oils and filters, the cab was polished and the lorry was ready for the traditional classic lorry-season starter, the Wegmuller Ausfahrt which we completed in the pouring rain. Unfortunately, there were some problems and on the way to start point in Attikon in the middle of the

city of Zurich the Saurer just stopped. The engine didn't seem to be getting any diesel so we checked the filters, tried to clean the pipes from the tank to the filter by blowing through them and we managed to get the lorry going again. We had the same problem on our way home but later we discovered that there is also a filter in the tank and to prevent any further problems the whole tank was thoroughly cleaned."

## BACK ON THE ROAD

"The next winter I removed various parts including the battery box, toolbox and tank cover for repair and refurbishment, and at Easter 2008 the chassis was repainted. With this work completed the Saurer passed its MOT and was given a 'classic registration'. The next highlight was our trip to the Netherlands with three Saurer tractor units being driven to the Montforter Oldtimer Treffen, a classic meeting in my former hometown of Montfort in the south east of the Netherlands."

"In the autumn of 2008 I had the rust repaired and the cab repainted at a local paint and body workshop. The cab has a steel frame and polycarbonate panels and where these join the frame there were a number of cracks and splits which had to be repaired. After four



The Saurer 5DF as purchased by Laurent in 2007.



Before and after! Painting the chassis, Easter 2008.

seasons I overhauled the engine changing the liners, piston rings and replacing the crankshaft bearings."

"Most of the lorries in Switzerland are restored and kept in a condition like new or perhaps better and when shown at meetings they often have large bunches of flowers on the grille. I prefer to show a vehicle in a style which reflects its working days in the 1970s or 1980s which you often see on the German classic scene. Over the last few years I have added a few details including the TIR plate, snowchains and stickers from the mountain passes and countries which we have visited. One recent highlight was our participation at the 'Historic Containertransfer' at the Harbour Museum in Hamburg in July 2016, and so far we have driven 20,000km since we bought the Saurer in 2007"

"As a classic vehicle in Switzerland is only allowed to do a maximum of 3000km each year we decided to buy another lorry which would enable us to attend more events during

the season. In December 2008 I saw an advertisement for a Saurer 4DF, an example of the smallest model which the company sold during the 1970s. This type is not very popular on the classic scene as almost everyone wants one of the larger, more powerful models, but as we already have one of those the 4DF seemed to be a good choice. This type is also rather uncommon and I think that under twenty have survived to the present day."

#### A RARE MODEL

"The 4DF is powered by a Saurer 8.8-litre six-in-line 230hp turbocharged engine with a ZF six-speed gearbox. The single cylinder head caused problems when not properly 'warmed up', and it is a very high revving unit which causes problems when using the engine brake at high revs. These features did not make this a popular model but we liked the look of it and it was also rare which added to its appeal. So, in January 2009 we bought it from the owners, Jenni in Thun, which had owned the lorry



from new. This was a small company which sold heating oil and they bought the Saurer fitted out as a tanker in 1976. At some time during the 1990s the company bought a new tanker but they kept the Saurer and fitted a canvas tilt body."

"When we bought the Saurer from Jenni it had only 160,000km on the clock, and we also liked the idea of installing some living accommodation under the canvas to provide a little home-from-home comfort while we are away on a run. First there was some rust in the cab floor and wheel arches to attend to and the engine was serviced and all the fluids and filters changed. In May 2009 we took the 4DF to the Wegmuller Ausfahrt as a test drive for our planned trip to the Netherlands. The lorry went well and a week later, and still on temporary licence plates, we made the trip to the Montforter Oldtimer Treffen. After that we bought a small caravan which fitted under the canvas and provided us with our accommodation."



November 2008 and the 5DF has its cab repaired and repainted.



Working on the 5DF's engine in September 2012.

"In August 2010 the lorry had its MOT and was registered as a mobile home as we would then be able to drive on Sunday when lorries are not allowed on the road. We were able to go to a meeting outside Switzerland, sleep in the Saurer and make the return journey home on the Sunday. In Switzerland because of the restriction the meetings are only held on Saturdays."

"In 2011 some further work was carried out and the cab was painted and a new canvas was fitted. The previous year we had a holiday in Norway and we had visited the big classic meeting in Magnor which is held every two years. At this meeting the Transporthistorik Forening organises its major road run and we made up our minds to get the 4DF ready to take part in this event. Apart from checking that everything was in good order the 4DF needed little extra work, and we were able to enjoy our first big holiday trip between 24 June and 10 July 2012. From Switzerland we journeyed across Europe via Hamburg to Kiel then took the ferry to Gothenburg then on to Halden and Magnor for the Vognmannen Road Run. Then to Trollhattan, Varberg ferry to Grena, through Germany again to a small meeting in the middle

The Saurer 5DF pictured in August 2014 at the Flüelapass.



of the Netherlands, then back through Germany and home, a trip of almost 4000km. Since then we have spent our summer holidays in more or less the same way, visiting different places and meeting many other classic lorry enthusiasts. In 2013 we took part in the Locomotion en Fete near Paris, and a week later had a good time

on the Steelboys Road Run and the Classic and Vintage Commercial Show at Gaydon."

"We thought that having two lorries to keep and maintain really was enough, but as you know in the Summer of 2013 we bought the DAF 2205, so now we have the three classics to 'play' with." ↗



Using the Saurer 5DF to collect the 20ft Kassbohrer container trailer in August 2016.



Picking up the Saurer 4DF in January 2009 from previous owners Jenni in Thun.



A small caravan was fitted into the 4DF to provide accommodation. The lorry is now registered in Switzerland as a motorhome so it can be driven on a Sunday.



Repainting the 4DF cab in November 2011.

## A SUITABLE TRAILER

"In Switzerland there are very few vehicles with trailers on the classic scene but I always liked these combinations when I saw them at meetings in the Netherlands and Germany. I wondered what would be suitable for the Saurer 5DF tractor unit. It should have Swiss trailer brakes and Trilex wheels, and not be too long so it could do the mountain road runs, and also get a place to park without too much difficulty."

"In 2011 I saw a 20ft container chassis which had everything that I was looking for. The container was used as a mobile warehouse but the problem was that it was not for sale. In the meantime, we completed the restoration of the DAF and forgot about the trailer. However, in November 2015 I

saw it again in the same place but this time without the container. After our trip to the Historic Containertransfer in Hamburg, where I could drive with a trailer at the Harbour Museum, I could not get the old container chassis out of my mind. I went to the company, which was a Mercedes commercial garage, and discovered that the owner also happens to be a Saurer collector. I asked again if I could buy the trailer and this time a deal was agreed and in July 2016 the 20ft Kassbohrer container chassis was ours. The refurbishment of the trailer will be our next project."

"As far as the work on the lorries is concerned, I do all the work myself with help from my girlfriend Franziska and my work colleagues who are always willing to help. I

am very lucky that my bosses, two brothers, let me have space in their workshops to work on the lorries in my spare time, at the weekends and often a few hours after work in the evening. They also help when I come across any problems. We are also fortunate to be able to call on Walter Stutz. He is already over 70 years old but at his company we can get almost every part we need for our Saurers, and some which are not available can be specially made."

"Now with three lorries to maintain and take out, and the trailer to refurbish, we have our hands full, so at the moment there are no plans to add to the collection".

My thanks to Laurent for kindly providing the information and photographs of these two superb Swiss classics. ♦

The completed 4DF with a new canvas tilt, pictured in May 2011.



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# Coming back home

Dave Bowers tells the story of a very well-travelled 1937 Singer 7cwt van.

**R**odney Thompson's enthusiasm for buying a Singer 7cwt van advertised in the Singer Owner's Club magazine was blunted when he noticed that it was located over 2000 miles away in Fort Myers, Florida, USA. However, his interest was rekindled when the next edition of the magazine carried the same sales advert.

"In December 2012 I phoned the owner, Mike Artlett, for more details," said Rodney. "He had bought the van when he lived in Victoria on Vancouver Island in Canada in the 1970s. An elderly neighbour, Mr Stuart, asked Mike if he could mow the lawn for him, and when Mike opened the garage door to collect the mower, there was the van. Mr Stuart had bought it in 1950 but laid it up in the garage in 1958 following a mechanical problem. The van was bought by Mike after Mr Stuart died in 1983; although other than pushing it from

one garage to the next, nothing was done to it. The van was transported to Florida when Mike retired."

Despite the daunting logistics of getting the van back to the UK, Rodney was hooked. So, he contacted his brother Michael, who lives in Ontario, and asked him if he could transport the van from the USA back to Canada. Michael had experience of this sort of job, as he had previously repatriated a couple of Oliver-badged / David Brown-built tractors from North America for Rodney.

However, there was a problem as the van had never been officially exported from Canada to the USA. To clear the way for its return, Michael visited the Canadian - USA border in June 2013, but without the van. His objective was to present an invoice and a letter outlining change of ownership. After discussion with authorities on both sides of the frontier, it was agreed the van could pass

from the United States to Canada without any further border formalities or import charges. This was a wiser approach than turning up at the border without a prior agreement that everything would simply fall into place. But it did leave the problem of transporting the van northwards from Florida to Canada.

## BACK TO CANADA

Fortunately, Michael knew a friend who lived nearby who imported American pick-up trucks from Florida to Canada. It was agreed Michael could accompany his friend on the next buying trip. This involved flying down to Florida, and after picking up a newly bought pick-up truck and a trailer, Michael would use them to transport the Singer to Canada. So ended a 2,314 mile journey in both directions, first by air going south, and then by road travelling north along the Eastern Seaboard, covering 800 road miles a day.



The Singer was one of two bought new in 1937 by W H Hughes, Island Window Cleaners of British Columbia, Canada.

True to plan, crossing the border went smoothly, and after contacting a shipping agent, Terry Danson of Gorrie, Ontario, who had transported Rodney's tractors on previous occasions, the Singer van was put in a container in Halifax, Nova Scotia. This was then carried by a ship which docked in Liverpool in August 2013. The container, which was also loaded with old tractors, had been imported by Lyn Jones, and after it arrived in the Aberystwyth area, Rodney went to collect the van, which was the first time he'd seen it.

Rodney detailed what happened next: "After arriving home in North Lancashire, I could see the van needed a full stripdown. I noticed the lower sections of the rear mudguards had been removed, as had the sections of the rear body behind the mudguards. But generally the van was sound and complete. Not attractive though, as it had



Owner and restorer, Rodney Thompson.



The Singer as it arrived home in North Lancashire in September 2013. Photo Rodney Thompson collection.



The van's body required work, particularly to the wooden frame. The engine was rebuilt using new pistons. Photos Rodney Thompson collection.

been repainted in a shade of pea green that looked awful, with the chrome painted over as well!"

It was decided to leave any further work until after New Year 2014, by which time Rodney had learnt a lot more about the van after receiving a surprise phone call on Boxing Day from someone with a Canadian accent who identified himself as Bob Hughes.

"Bob said he was the grandson of the van's first owner who'd bought two Singer vans for his window cleaning business in 1937 - the other Singer van had been scrapped long ago," said Rodney. "His grandfather emigrated to Canada in about 1909 and he used Model T vans for his business - W H Hughes, Island Window Cleaners. Because of the family connection, Bob tried to buy the van from Mike Artlett after seeing it at a show in the Eighties, but his offer was firmly declined. This was the last Bob saw of the van, and I

explained this wasn't surprising as the van was then transported to Florida. Bob wanted to buy my van, but I had to say sorry: I wanted to hang on to this one! He commented on the van's horrible green paint and described its original appearance in RAF blue/grey with black wings. So, I said I'd paint it in these colours. Bob said he'd send a photo of another Hughes van, a Pontiac, in the correct colour, which also detailed the firm's signwriting."

## ENGINE PROBLEM

However, the van's restoration didn't get off to a fortuitous start, as when Rodney turned the starting handle he felt no resistance, indicating lack of compression. He also observed the dynamo was hanging loose from its retaining bolts, and the removal of the inspection cover suggested it was inoperative as well: it subsequently required the field coils and armature replacing.



The restored engine was completed with a coat of maroon paint.



Interior work involved stripping and re-varnishing the dashboard.



The cast '7cwt' radiator emblem is a nice touch.

Rodney removed the engine and gearbox before turning his attention to other matters. The perished roof covering was removed and the original John Bull tyres were also scrapped. The wheels were professionally stripped to bare metal, and Rodney accomplished the same task with the bodywork using Nitromors paint stripper. This task went smoothly on any alloy panels, but not the steel wings which had been stove enamelled, so it was time to bring out the big guns using a powerful orbital sander.

The alloy panels had a few dints but little in the way of corrosion. However, the steel front wings were both dented, which

suggested problems stopping due to faulty brakes. Some rot was identified in the wood frame of the nearside inner wing, which took a disproportionate amount of effort to rectify, as the complete panel side of the van had to be removed in order to gain access and to let in a new section of wood.

After replacing the side panel, Rodney tackled the previously identified damage at the rear where the lower sections of the wings, sides and rear panel had been cut off, presumably as a result of accident damage. In addition, the supporting wooden corner posts had been broken off. Repairs involved

making and splicing in new sections of wood for the lower sections of the corner posts, and Rodney fabricated alloy repair sections for the side panels which were welded and riveted into place; he also fabricated lower wing repair panels for each side of the van which were also welded into place, and he made a replacement back panel to match the required curved design.

Strangely, after removing the front wings to repair dents resulting from some other accident damage, the inner wings were found to be missing, for which no explanation was apparent. Help was at hand from Russ Evans, the Singer Owner's Club's commercial van registrar, who offered to loan the inner wings from the Singer van he was restoring so Rodney could use them as patterns to make replacements.

## SEATS AND UPHOLSTERY

After wrestling a scruffy old bench seat from an American car out of the van, Rodney couldn't understand why something so cumbersome had been installed. However, during the time when the van was used by the window cleaning business a ladder was carried on the outside of the van, which meant the passenger door couldn't be opened, so fitting a bench seat allowed a passenger to slide across more easily when entering or leaving the van. The bench seat was discarded and replaced with two small seat frames recovered in blue leather upholstery.

The Singer has been finished off in its original livery.



By February 2014 the rolling bodyshell was handed over to a local paint shop from which it emerged in the following April looking spic and span in the colours of W H Hughes, Island Window Cleaners.

In the meantime, before the van was returned, Rodney checked over the gearbox to satisfy himself all was well before turning attention to the engine: "I noticed the valve timing was wrong, something I attended to later on. After removing the cylinder head, I could see the surfaces of the exhaust valves were burnt and the inlet valves were in poor condition. The mains and big-end bearings were in good condition, although the pistons were in an awful state. Lancaster Vintage Spares provided replacement pistons, and I obtained new gaskets, timing chains, also other bits and pieces from Dave Hardwick, a Singer spares specialist, who's sadly passed away now."

"I rebuilt the lower half of the engine and then moved onto the cylinder head. The valves were beyond saving, so it was lucky I had two spare engines. I'd restored a Singer Roadster previously, and the spare engines were obtained as I needed a replacement block because the original was cracked. So, I built the Roadster's engine using parts from the two spare engines. This meant the valves from the Roadster's engine could be used for the van. The only problem then was that the valves in the Roadster engine had a larger head width, so the heads on the valves were machined down to match the valve seats on the van's cylinder head. The valve timing was reset, a new clutch plate was fitted, and a coat of

maroon paint finished off the engine for now."

When the newly painted body was returned, Rodney refitted the glass, and a new vinyl roof cover was fitted which was made from motorcycle seat cover material – this was supple enough to fit around the corners without creasing.

## ORIGINAL PAINT

The chassis was rust-free in its original red paint, so Rodney decided to retain this feature rather than repaint it, and he added coats of Waxoyl as protection.

New front spring shackle bushes were fitted, as were new front wheel bearings, and the rear hub oil seals were replaced, with all of these parts obtained from Lancaster Vintage Spares. New wheel cylinders or seals improved the brakes as did work on the brake master cylinder.

"When I removed the master cylinder it was noticed the canister for the brake fluid was no longer attached to the main cylinder," Rodney explained. "This was repaired by re-soldering the canister to the cylinder and rebuilding the master cylinder with new seals. New brake hoses were fitted, and after bleeding the brakes, they worked for the first time in so many years!"

With the engine reinstalled, together with a new exhaust and a re-cored radiator, Rodney turned over the engine, which fired up, but was immediately shut down as the oil pressure did not increase.

"I removed the outlet from the oil pump and primed it with oil while turning the

starter handle," Rodney explained. "This time, when I used the starter motor, the oil pressure increased, so I reconnected the outlet, and the van's oil pressure has been fine ever since then. I then noticed the engine was ticking over too quickly, and after stripping down the carburettor, I noticed the throttle body was warped so the throttle flap wasn't closing. I then used a spare carburettor to replace the body, the throttle flap and spindle."

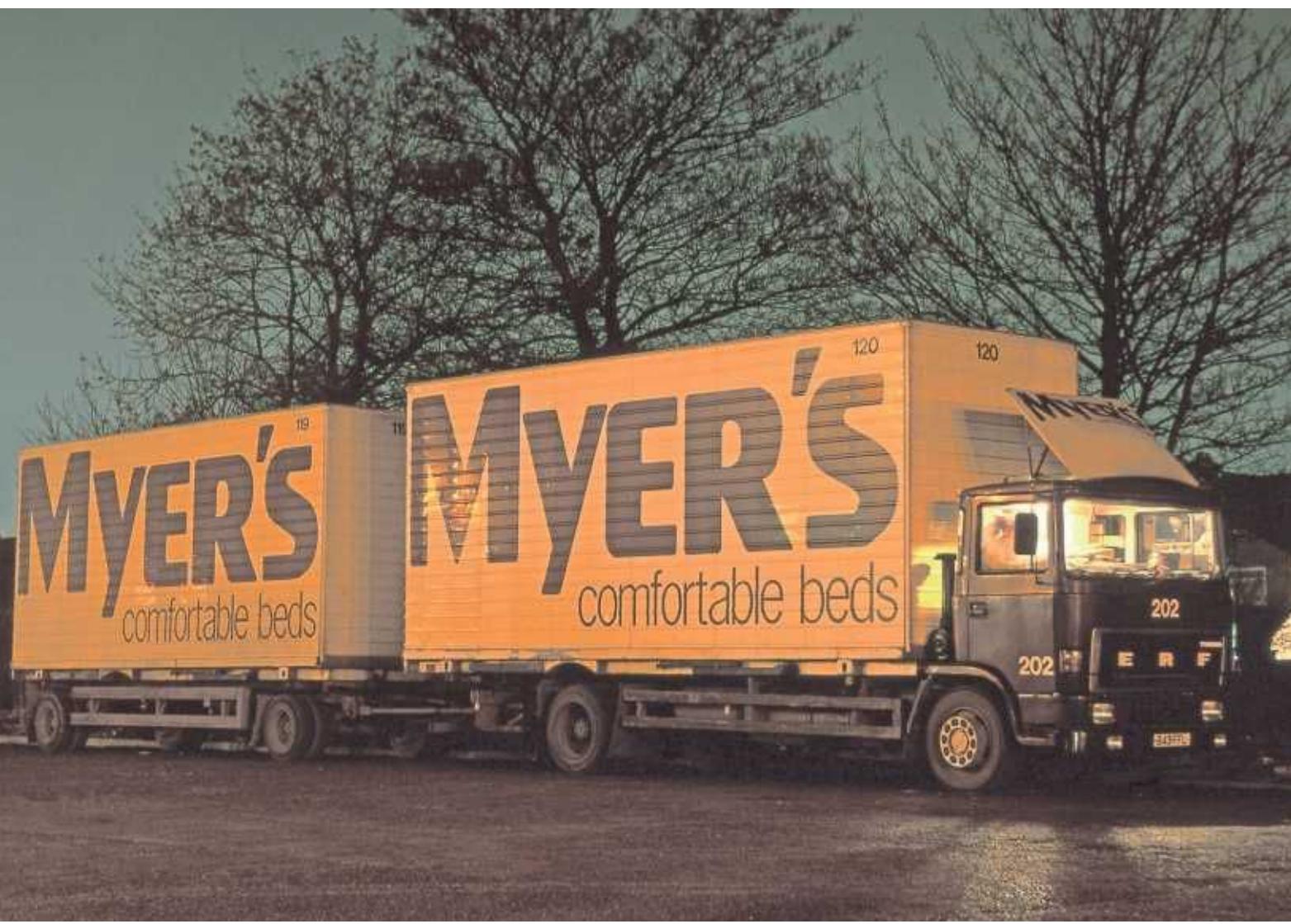
Interior work involved stripping and re-varnishing the dashboard, and fitting a new wiring loom with provision for discreetly sized indicators – the van being left-hand-drive, Rodney decided his arms weren't long enough for hand signals when turning right!

As for the last few jobs, a set of Waymaster tyres from Vintage Tyre Supplies of Beaulieu, and reconditioned wheels meant the van was no longer raised on axle stands, and in November 2014, Rodney contacted Vic Mather of Morecambe who faithfully replicated the original signwriting.

The various ways and means by which a classic vehicle is restored back to full working order are often difficult, varied and unusual, although who would have thought a van as unique as this Singer 7cwt could have avoided being broken up all those years ago in Canada, and then survived its long sojourn in Florida before arriving back in the UK where it was then rebuilt. It perhaps arrived at the very same dock in Liverpool from which it departed these shores all those years ago, after being swung aloft by crane onto a ship bound for the distant shores of Canada! ♦



The Singer has a unique story, having worked in Canada, been stored in the US, and rebuilt in Britain.



# Wagon and drag

**Mark Gredzinski looks back at the heyday of the classic British drawbar outfit.**

**M**ost articulated commercials use a single semi-trailer on a tractor, but an alternative is the drawbar combination. In the main these are rigid four-wheeled units with an articulating bogie on a four-wheeled trailer. They are generally more popular on the continent than over here, with some using spectacular six- and eight-wheeled units and trailers to be seen where more generous length limits allow. Sweden, for example, allows 24 metre 52-tonne drawbars. When one of these passes you in the snow while driving a car, it causes a temporary 'whiteout' as a cubic metre of snow is tossed at your windscreens! I can vouch for this, having been in the north of the country. Similarly, Italy allows eight-wheeled drawbars, as does the Netherlands with rigs of up to 60-tonnes allowed there.

For this feature I thought I'd take a look

at a variety of drawbar combinations that I've seen over the years, at work on the roads of Britain. Note that all of the lorries pictured use a traditional articulating bogie and turntable rather than the more modern close-coupled drawbar trailers, which I'll have a look at later. The latter have a rigid chassis and a centrally placed (either four- or six-wheeled) axle arrangement.

Driving a drawbar is something of a double edged sword. On the one hand, on narrow winding roads and tight urban streets the trailer tracks in tighter behind the unit than an artic. The shorter trailer generally does not cut across corners like an artic and the driver therefore does not have to swing the drive unit out as much. However, reversing is another matter, especially when the unit is coupled which requires much practise. Uncoupling the trailer is easier, using the front tow hitch to face the trailer and

▲ Myer's Beds have been in operation since 1876. In the past they have used Bedford TK units I believe, and today use Iveco and DAF CF drawbars of the centre bogie type. This picture of an ERF C Series was taken around 1989, and would have taken around a four minute exposure to record the unit at night.

then nose it around a tight bend. Good wide mirrors are a big help for obvious reasons. A class C+E licence (the equivalent of the old Class 1 licence) is need for the heavier drawbar combinations today.

One advantage of the drawbar arrangement is that more cubic feet of space is available than with a single artic trailer. This is useful for relatively light but high bulk loads like bed mattresses, foodstuffs and expanded plastics. Then there is the flexibility of leaving one trailer behind and picking up another with a different load, or running solo if need be. Also in very tight rural spaces like farms, the wagon and drag can get where an artic cannot. In this instance, some drawbar milk tankers are in use.

The popularity of them has increased over the years and photographically it makes a nice change to see drawbar lorries, away from the plethora of regular artics on the road.



Based in Ossett, West Yorkshire, A&W Mitchell Ltd used this 1980 Mercedes SK four-wheel rigid on crane and haulage duties. It was photographed on the M5 around 1990 in West Bromwich, and the unusual load was six pairs of steel train carriage wheels.



▲ This Mercedes LP with a triple-axle drawbar trailer was an unusual sight in 1989. It was parked up late one afternoon under a railway bridge in the Digbeth district of central Birmingham, but I don't know its country of origin.

► In January 1989, Walkers of Wakefield were using this tidy 1987 Dodge Commando drawbar outfit. It was parked up early one morning in January 1989 in the Witton area of Birmingham. This 60 foot long rig made sense for removals work, where high volume was more important than weight-carrying capacity on a conventional artic.



▲ This S21-cabbed 'Mickey Mouse' Foden dates from the early sixties. It was photographed near Masham in North Yorkshire in July 1992. The tractor has what appears to be a Gardner diesel generator in the back, while the trailer holds components for 'Mrs Eileen Ayers Old Tyme Roundabout.'





Quite a few DAF rigid units were pressed into service as drawbar combinations. I'm unsure of the origins of JE Thomas, but this 1987 DAF 2500 unit with a bagged load was captured on the M6 in February 1992 using a 200mm telephoto lens on my camera.



**Left:** The 'MEB' is the abbreviation of Midlands Electricity Board. It used a variety of vehicles, from Bedford HA vans upwards. This 1986 ERF C Series drawbar was one of a few used, and they later had E Series units. The shot was taken in January 1991, not far from its depot in Walsall.

**Right:** Based in Birmingham, Bob Wilson Funfairs have used many Volvos of late. However, back in the mid-eighties, they used a lot of Atkinsons, and I have photos of Gardner 240-powered Venturers, and a Viewline among others. This Cummins-powered six-wheeler was towing what appears to be a toilet block trailer, and was photographed passing through the centre of Birmingham in May 1986. The Atkinson prime mover was originally a mid-sixties 6x6 motorway gritter.



ERF has always been a popular make for drawbar combinations, and this ERF E10 rigid is typical of the breed. Belonging to Midlands based Howard Evans Roofing, this fully loaded brand-new lorry was photographed on the M6 in July 1989.



Brindley Asphalt of Bilston, near Wolverhampton, used this Leyland Clydesdale with tipper body to tow a drawbar trailer used for heating bitumen. Note the unequal diameter of the tyres used on the trailer. The shot was taken in March 1995, making this among some of the last Clydesdales in use.



Showman's tractors were traditionally good old Gardner-powered British tackle like this 1979 Foden S83. It was eleven years old by the time it was photographed, and the clog was going to be put down firmly on the floor, as it was about to tackle a fairly steep rise.



Plysu made blow-moulded plastic packaging and used, among other makes, Ford D Series and Volvo FL7 lorries for product carriage. In August 1996 this Mercedes LN drawbar outfit was in use, negotiating a Walsall roundabout.



◀ Based in Killin, by Loch Tay in Stirling, K Taylor and Sons ran this Scania 113m drawbar, and nowadays favour Volvos. They haul a lot of livestock and farm materials - hence the sheep painted on the roof-mounted air deflector. The picture was taken in March 1996 on the A1 in Boroughbridge, North Yorkshire. This was my brother's favourite stretch of road before it became a motorway, and he pulled over to stop for a while. This allowed me to take some lorry pictures, before the road was later widened.



**Left:** If there is one thing better than photographing a drawbar combination, it's one with a Chinese-six-wheel layout on the prime mover. This livestock rig was captured by panning carefully at 1/125th of a second in the low light of a February afternoon. JH Kirk and Son of Mobberley in Cheshire were running this lorry in 1994. Interestingly, the registration indicates that it dates from 1968, meaning it may have been a re-cabbed ERF LV, but I can't be sure. **Right:** Among the number of drawbar units run by the Midlands Electricity Board were some of the last of the Bedford TM models. This is a wide cab (as against the narrow cab version) and I saw it a few times after November 1991 when the photo was taken, as it headed back to its depot in Walsall.



The Edinburgh Woollen Mill were long time ERF users, and had EC and ECX lorries as their final choice before migrating onto MAN units. Late in 1996, this 1991 ERF E10 was in the fleet, and doubtless had come down the M6 with a load of woollen garments to distribute.



Around 1985, I was walking down a local main road in north Birmingham with my camera at the ready. I was able to capture this 1978 AEC Mercury drawbar on rather grainy cheap film, but I had my shot. Strand Glass needed a high volume rig with a light chassis and this machine fitted the bill.



In November 1988 this Volvo FL7 drawbar would have been a couple of years old at most. The photo was taken late afternoon when the light was fading on a motorway in the Midlands, and I think the unit carried automotive components.



W Parry and Sons of St Briavels, Lydney in Gloucestershire, ran this 1986 DAF 2100. The picture was taken in August 1995, and I clambered into a thankfully dry ditch to get the low viewpoint for this shot, taken on the A40 leading to Ross-on-Wye. More straw bales can be carried with this combination than on an artic.

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# BULLDOG BREED

**Mack's iconic Bulldog trademark came about thanks to respect given by British soldiers in WW1 to the way the trucks performed. Ed Burrows delves into the history of the legendary make, now owned by AB Volvo though the Swede's acquisition of Renault**



Introduced in 1916, the AC soldiered on until 1934. The radiator is between the engine and the cab.



In 'Live and Let Die', the 1977 James Bond movie, trundling along a levee road, an ancient Mack slowed up a police chase and stole the scene. In 1964 it featured in a two-page Mack ad in a weekly US news magazine.

This particular Mack AB came to be known in the New Orleans area as the 'Oyster Truck' and in the 1980s starred in street parades and truck shows – and in another movie, 'Pretty in Pink'. It was operational until 2005, when Hurricane Katrina put it under ten or so feet of water for over a month. Now in a shabbier state than it deserves, it rests in New Orleans awaiting restoration.

When the ad came out, in 41 years the 'Oyster Truck' had clocked over a million miles. The ad's headline questioned if a Mack would last 75 years. Advertisements can be taken with a pinch of salt. Though in need of TLC, the 'Oyster Truck' is now 94 years old.

Not for nothing is 'built like a Mack truck' a common turn of phrase in the US. A Brit who will attest to Mack's legendary built quality

is Bulldog enthusiast Paul Brook, who with his daughter Debbie runs the Rusty Trucks restoration business in Appleby, Cumbria. Paul has a rare 1949 LFSW and a chain-drive 1929 AC. Although both are in the process of restoration, they are constantly pushed to the back of the queue in deference to customer projects. "In the 1920s, Mack's engineering and metallurgical knowhow placed it way ahead of the competition," he explains. "You can take a wrench to a nut and bolt on a wreck discarded half a century or more ago and, rather than being corroded solid, it will unscrew with relative ease." The bald fact is, Mack perfected the art of manufacturing heavy duty trucks as mass production items – at a time of course when no other country came anywhere near to the US in terms of volume demand.

The AB series – in chain and alternatively worm (and later double reduction) drive specifications – continued in production from 1914 until 1937, an exceeding long period considering the pace of truck industry

technical development in the intervening years. Specifications of course evolved, and the first AB was a rather different basket of oysters to the last off the line some 55,000 trucks later. The original AB had a 30bhp engine, the four cylinders of which were cast in pairs. Later models had 60bhp. Load capacities were from one to 2.5-tons – and up to 10-tons with a trailer.

Mack earned its stripes for its defining characteristic of rugged durability during World War One, when the performance of the Mack AC serving with the British Army forged the make's future reputation. A strong claimant to being the world's first seriously heavy duty truck, the AC proved so unstoppable British troops dubbed it the 'Bulldog'. The tenacious canine was adopted as Mack's emblem in 1922.

Over 40,000 chain drive ACs, in capacities of 3.5-, 5.5- and 7.5-tons, were built from 1916 – two years after the start of WW1 – until 1939, a remarkably long production life.

In its original form, the AC was powered by



This 1929 AC is in the condition obviously relished by Mack aficionado Paul Brook's Rusty Trucks restoration business.



When it featured in a 1964 Mack ad this veteran AB had done over a million miles, later appearing in the James Bond 'Live and Let Die' movie.



Chain-drive bogie, open-sided cab, rad ahead of cab, visibly pumped up with testosterone, a 1936 super heavy duty AP.

a 75bhp, 7.7-litre, four-cylinder gasoline engine. Like the AB, the cylinder heads were cast in pairs. A feature shared with earlier Macks was a pressed steel frame. Unlike the AB – which has a conventional front radiator – the AC's radiator was positioned between the engine and the cab. Although unorthodox, at the time of its design the arrangement was not unique, and also featured on certain other Mack models produced during the course of the 1920s and 1930s. The layout was undoubtedly influenced by WW1-era Renaults, which used the same radiator arrangement and featured closely similar scoop-sided engine hood sheetmetal. (Seventy-odd years later, vengeance was Renault's when it acquired the Mack Trucks business.)

In the AC's sixth year of production, the original three-speed gearbox was replaced by a four-speed unit, and in 1930 a six-cylinder engine option was available. Two years on and the AC could be spec'd with pneumatic tyres. In its final years the AC was offered with a choice

of Mack petrol engines or Cummins or Buda diesels.

### THE BEGINNING

Mack's origins go back to a Scranton, Pennsylvania horse wagon and carriage works operated by Jack, Augustus and William Mack. Their first motor vehicle, 'Old Number One', was introduced in 1900. It was actually a bus, subsequently converted to a truck, and went on to clock up a working life of one million miles.

In 1904, forward-thinking Jack and Gus Mack built an experimental 90bhp engine, a level of truck engine output unheard of at the time – and not equalled by a production Mack engine for another twenty years. The following year saw a series of six pivotal developments. A fourth brother, Joseph, joined the business. Constant mesh and direct-shift gearbox innovations were patented (and licensed to other manufacturers). The brothers also expanded into railway locomotives and rolling stock manufacture – and introduced

a pioneering cab-over-engine truck, sold as a 'Manhattan'.

The Mack nameplate replaced 'Manhattan' in 1910. The year following, the Mack brothers sold out. By this time the range comprised 3-5 ton 'Hi-Cab' cabovers and 30bhp Junior and Senior bonneted models ranging from 50bhp 1-2 tonners to 60bhp 3-5 ton trucks. It wasn't long before the Senior model load capacities was extended downwards to 0.75-ton and raised to 7.5-ton at the upper end.

Annual output during this period peaked at 100 trucks. By the time the AB arrived on the scene in 1914, production capacity had increased to 600 trucks a year. Mack was now perfectly poised to handle the upsurge in demand after the AC entered production in 1916, the year before the US entered the fray in the WW1 battlefields of France and Belgium.

Highlighting how crude trucks were in this period – and the responsiveness of what was still an industry in its infancy – in 1918, the year the war ended, Mack pioneered



Not to be confused with the later B Series, the first B Series debuted in 1928. Later versions had a lower cab and engine hood.



The 1930s 'Traffic Type' was Mack's second-generation COE, though Mack did not properly crack the cabover market until the 1960s.



Big gun, big Mack: the NO series of 'Long Tom' 155mm and 240mm howitzer artillery prime movers were WW2's biggest 6x6s.



Early post-WW2 LTSW 'West Coast' highway and logging tractor options included 306bhp Hall-Scott butane-fuelled engines.

the introduction of air cleaners and oil filters, resulting in improved fuel economy maintenance savings. These innovations were quickly followed by vacuum-boosted power brakes and rubber isolators to cushion chassis-mounted components from road shocks.

An improving highway network brought with it growth in long distance trucking. In the late-1920s Mack capitalised on the opportunities with its original B Series. Similar in appearance to the AB, B Series models had pneumatic tyres as standard and are claimed to be the first trucks with a hypoid-type rear diff. Initial 1.5-2 ton specs were joined during the early 1930s by trucks and tractors with six-cylinder engines of up to 128bhp, the option of a double-drive bogie and GCWs up to 20-tons. By the end of the decade the B Series had been replaced by E Series lighter trucks and higher-payload L models, both produced in conventional and COE variants. In parallel, developed from the AC were two six-cylinder, 150bhp petrol engined ranges, the shaft-drive 2- and 3-axle AK highway trucks and tractors and chain-drive AP construction and mining trucks. Justifiably billed as 'super heavy duty', the off-highway 4x2 and 6x4 APs saw service on projects such as the Hoover Dam hydro-electric

scheme, fundamental to California's rise to economic prominence.

In 1937, the AC and AP models were replaced by the chain-drive F Series, the biggest Macks up to that time. As well as gasoline (petrol) engines, a year after introduction, F Series models were also available with Cummins or Buda diesels, or Mack's own compression ignition unit. This made Mack the first US truck manufacturer to build its own diesels (notable for sharing the same block as their petrol fuelled equivalents). The AC-type cab and old-style engine hood and front radiator design soon gave way to sheet metal of contemporary appearance. F Series tractor rigs grossed up to 50 tons. The top spec FCSW 6x4 dumper model, with a 175bhp Mack Thermodyne petrol engine, could haul 30 tons.

## THE SECOND WORLD WAR

For World War Two, Mack engineers ratcheted up off-highway performance by several more notches. Alongside a variety of 4x2 and 6x4 models were two Thermodyne engined 6x6 ranges, the 6-ton NM Series of cargo trucks and 7.5-ton NO Series artillery prime movers, wreckers and a fifth-wheel tractor. The 6x4s and 4x2s were essentially militarised versions of

civilian models.

The most significant 6x4 in terms of physical size and numbers built was the 10-ton rated NR. Initially procured for the British Army (before the US entered the war) for deployment in the Middle East. Between 1940 and 1945 Mack delivered some 15,000 NRs in twenty different Series. Closed cabs were replaced by canvas and half-doors on specifications built from 1942 onwards, and from 1944 big singles on the drive axle wheels were replaced by 11.00-24 twins. Against US Army convention during this period, rather than petrol engines, NRs were powered by Mack Type ED 8.5-litre, 6-cylinder diesels. Developing 131bhp at 2,000rpm, the ED had twin interchangeable 3-cylinder heads. The engine incorporated the patented Lanova pre-combustion air chamber system, also used by Buda and others.

NM Series 6x6 cargo trucks and artillery prime movers were rated as 6-tonners and first appeared in 1940. Seven versions were produced. The closed cab of earlier models was replaced by a canvas top and half-doors in 1942. Power was supplied by a Mack Type EY gasoline engine, 11.6-litre, 6-cylinder generating 170bhp at 2,100rpm and 550ft-lb at 800rpm. A total of 7,236 of all variants were



The L Series evolved into a vast range of specifications from trucks to dumpers, and long-haul tractor like this L J.



Gargantuan even by today's standards, Arctic convoy LRVSWs hauled 65ft trailers with 4,580-gallons of fuel in belly tanks.

delivered to US, British and Commonwealth armed forces. Which brings us to WW2's Big Mack – the NO Series, classed as a 7.5-tonner.

The biggest series-production 6x6 tractor-truck of WW2, the NO featured bench seating and cargo bodywork. It was primarily designed for towing the 155mm 'Long Tom' gun or 240mm short-barrel howitzer. (Both these artillery pieces featured a two-axle carriage bogie with twin-tyres all round. The trails were supported on a demountable front axle dolly with tow-hitch.) The engine was the same Mack Type EY military-spec Thermodyne derivative that powered the NM Series. Like the NM, the transmission was a 5-speed with 2-speed transfer case. A giant by the standards of the time, the NO had a notably short 12ft wheelbase and an overall length of 24ft 8in. Extra-wide at 8ft 6in, this was sufficient for the canvas-top cab to seat five abreast. Tyres were 14.00x24s. A particular feature of the NO was the driven front axle's Mack-designed elevated bevel-gear steering arrangement. This dispensed with the usual universal joints in the steering ends. By the end of WW2, Mack had delivered seven variants and a combined total of 2,053 units.

The reputation earned by NM and NO

Series models gave Mack an edge that helped to secure contracts in the early 1950s for the design of the US Army's 5-ton M51/M52 6x6s (also assembled by other manufacturers). This was followed in the middle of the decade by the 10-ton M123 6x6 tank transporter tractor and its M125 artillery prime mover counterpart. Engines were 286-300bhp (initially gasoline, later diesel). Tyres were 14.00-24s.

In terms of might, the biggest civilian Macks of this period were LRVSW 6x4s. The top spec engine was a 600bhp Cummins 28 litre VTA28 turbocharged V12 diesel, a 40 degree V design with a torque peak of 1,600lb.ft. Evolved from L Series heavy haulage trucks introduced in 1940, the LRVSW continued to be listed in the 1960s until Mack withdrew from this segment of the market.

Of the 209 LRVSWs built, the great majority were mining dumpers. Others were oilfield flatbeds, and a handful saw service as fifth-wheel prime movers with oversized load haulage contractors.

### CANADIAN ADVENTURE

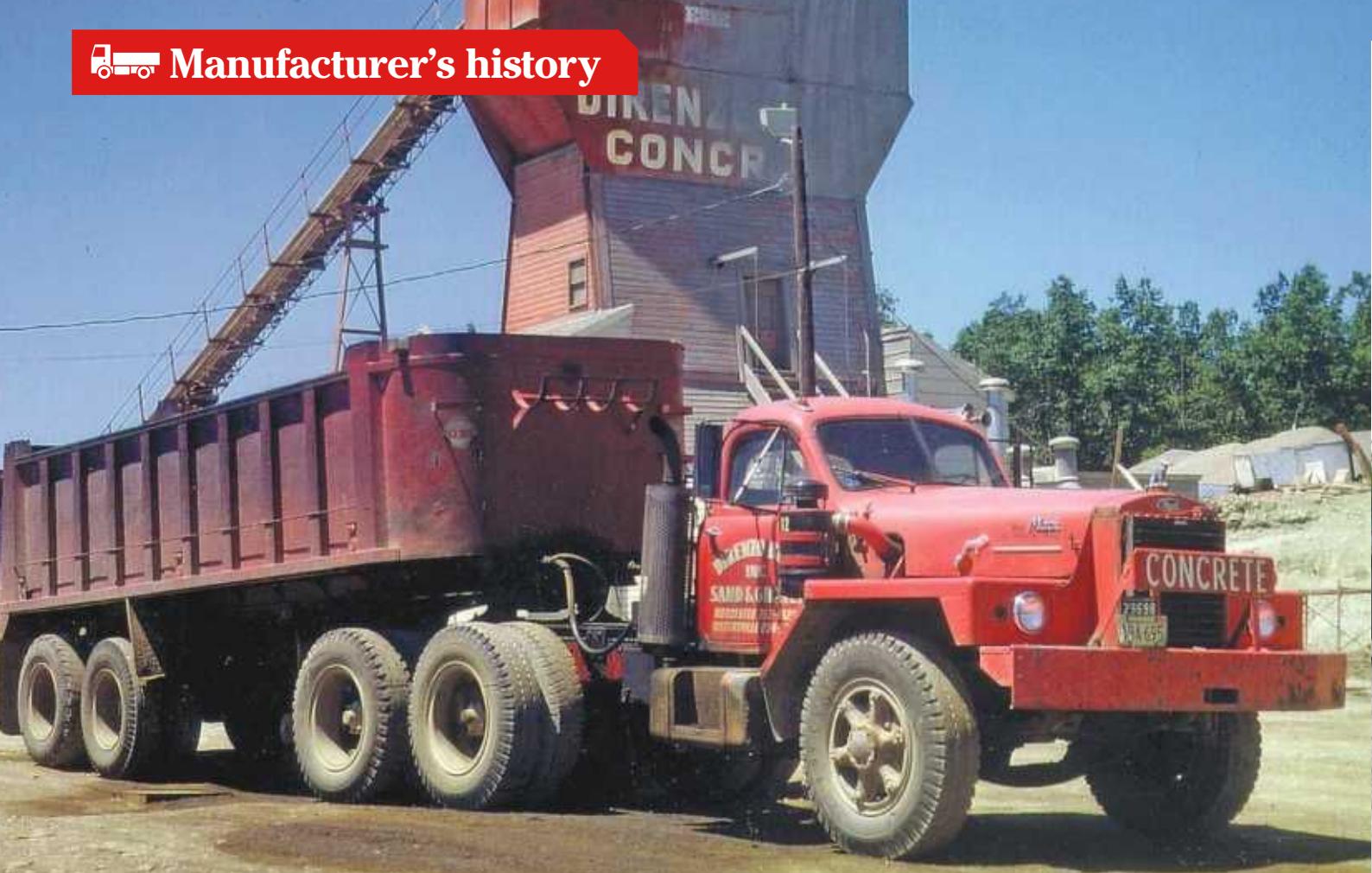
In the mid-1950s, Mack built a dozen as fifth-wheel tractors for a special mission to the Canadian Arctic to transport equipment



1950s Mack ads had unashamedly folksy artwork. Some tractors had a concave cab back-panel to suit rounded-front trailers.

for the construction of an element of the North American early warning radar chain. This wasn't just a matter of many years before ice road truckers – quite simply, there were no roads. The trucks were driven in convoy, preceded by bulldozers to clear the way. The 22 ton Arctic convoy LRVSWs were 27.5ft long, with a 16.8ft wheelbase. Front track was 8.3ft. Overall width across the extremities of the rear tyres measured 11.5ft. They had an all-welded tapered-frame chassis with wide-flange, 14.25in deep I-beam main members for maximum torsional rigidity. Transmission was through a Mack two-lever manual shift Duplex gearbox with eight forward speeds and two reverse. Drive was taken to a Mack Planidrive dual reduction axle bogie with inter-axle and differential power dividers. Tyres were 16.00x25s all-round. Wheels were suitably sized versions of Mack's trademark eight-spoke, rim-bolted arrangement. Although they were extensively customised, such were Mack's engineering and assembly shop resources that all twelve were delivered only nine weeks after the order was placed.

The pre-war looking 8.5-16.5 ton A Series introduced as a stop gap in 1950 did not exactly prepare the market for what came three years



B80 super-duty models joined the B line in 1956. The Bulldog radiator cap was definitely not out of place.

later – the much-revered B Series.

If classics are judged purely on aesthetics, Mack B Series trucks are bulldogs with a very big bark indeed. Mack delivered 127,786 examples between commencement of production and the last off the line in 1966 – convincing evidence that operators considered them to be the dog's whatsis in every other respect too. 1953, the year the B Series was launched, also marked Mack's introduction of its 180-211bhp Thermodyne END673 open-chamber, direct-injection diesel. Evolved from the earlier Lanova pre-combustion chamber system engines, the END673 was the heart of the B Series' reputation for performance combined with fuel efficiency. The engine's direct-injection system was actually contributed by Scania-Vabis, essentially in exchange for rights to a Mack municipal transit bus design.

The END673's downside was a narrow power band, necessitating for 5-, 10- and 20-speed transmissions and dual reduction axles. The Quadruplex 20-speeder incorporated constant-mesh helical gears. The 15 top speeds were stepped in 18 percent increments. Awkward – and hard labour with two shift-levers. But asking it to lug at below the optimal revs band risked melted pistons and blown gaskets.

B Series trucks were additionally available with Mack's L-head gasoline engine. In all, the variety of Mack engine options encompassed four gasoline straight-sixes, three naturally-aspirated and three turbocharged straight-six diesels plus gasoline and diesel V8s. The naturally aspirated 14-litre, 255bhp END864 diesel V8 appeared in 1962. B Series trucks were

ultimately available with 335bhp Cummins NTC engines. This spec had a Jake brake. To suit the higher emergency speeds required for fire trucks, Chrysler 'Hemi' (hemispherical combustion chamber) gasoline engines were on the options list. These were also the choice of gasoline-diehard truck operators.

## INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS

Heavy-end B Series models hit the market at the time the US was embarking on the construction of the Interstate highways network, the world's biggest transport infrastructure engineering project when initiated in 1956.

The 16.5 and 30 US short ton rated 2-axle B-20 and 2- and 3-axle B-42 were the 1953 launch models. Subsequent specifications, with 2- and 3-axle truck and fifth-wheel tractor options, included what is probably the most familiar variant, the B-61 (of which over 47,000 were produced), together with B-80 super-duty types with cast radiator and flat, military-style fenders. The B-80, launched in 1956, soon established itself as Mack's flagship. Completing the line-up were B-72, B-73 and B-75 'Great Western Group' models. Introduced in 1962 when Mack's V8 diesel became available, specs were framed around performance consistent with the mountainous conditions of America's West Coast states.

Mack had produced 68 variants by the time the B Series was taken out of production in 1966. Models ultimately ranged from 8.5-ton GVW trucks to 100+ ton gross combination weight tractors and super-duty bulk load models with double-channel frames. A 255bhp V8 diesel was introduced in 1962, and

'West Coast' specs offered Cummins power. Alongside the B Series were G, H, F and other cab-overs. These included West Coast market specs with Mack or Cummins diesels up to 335bhp.

Mack B Series were assembled overseas, interestingly in Europe initially by FTF in Holland and, after it was acquired by Mack, Bernard in France. Most Australian-assembled B Series were supplied in 'Down Under' specification, with Quadruplex TRQ two-stick, 20-speed gearboxes. By permitting substantially greater gross combination weights, the TRQ box was better suited to Australian requirements than North American market spec 'Duplex' TRD 10-speed monoshift transmission with direct top gear. With its ability to haul bigger loads at higher speeds, the B Series played a big part in introducing a new era in roadtrains operating in Australia's Outback.

Like Holland courtesy FTF, Australia and Iran were among countries where during the 1960s Mack established assembly plant joint-ventures with local firms. Mack's were assembled in Iran from 1968 until 1983. This ended when the Ayatollahs took over. Mack appears to have been highly regarded by Iranian operators. Volvo having recently announced a new JV in Iran, it is not inconceivable that Mack might also return.

From 1964 until the mid-1970s, Mack built – and designed – trucks in Canada. Locally designed models were a twin-steer DM variant for the construction market and CL350ST and RD800 loggers. During the same period, Mack also owned Hayes, the former logging truck specialist.



Magnificently restored, this Thermodyne engined B-61 belongs to Yorkshire earthmoving plant firm owner Robert Braithwaite.

## AUSTRALIAN ASSEMBLY

In 1963 Aussie transport entrepreneur and Mack operator Cyril Anderson secured a partnership deal with Mack partly on the strength of placing an order for 100 trucks. As well as imported finished vehicles, to reduce the impact of Australian import tariffs, trucks were assembled from CKD (completely-knocked-down) kits. Anderson being a practical minded truck-man, specs were gradually Australianised. This led to the eventual collapse of the relationship, with Mack in the US taking sole control.

Today's Australian Macks continue to differ from the US model range. The most extreme,

the unique Big Foot Titan derivative, was rationalised out of existence a dozen or so years ago by parent AB Volvo. Big Foot was outsized tractor for coal and mineral ore mine haulage multiple-trailer outfits grossing 300-plus tonnes with trailers and 70 tonnes gross for rigid tippers and dumpers. Engines were 600 bhp Caterpillar C16s or 620 bhp Cummins OSK19s.

The R Series, launched in 1965, produced another Mack movie star – 'Rubber Duck', a West Coast RS spec tractor. In 'Convoy', the Citizen Band radio cult action adventure movie, 'Rubber Duck' was the driver's CB handle. The black RS had a rather bigger role than the AB in 'Live and Let Die', made the year previously.

With engine hood and fenders moulded as a single piece of fibreglass, the R Series, and the allied tractor-only offset-cab U Series, were built for GVWs of 13 tons and upwards. Diesel and gasoline sixes and V8s with up to 225bhp were soon joined by the constant horsepower Maxidyne which, in its initial form, developed 206bhp at 1,200rpm and a peak of 237bhp at 1,700 rpm. Above the R and U highway models was the closely related DM Series, heavy duty trucks and tractors produced in 6x4, 6x6 and eventually 8x6 configurations, with offset cab and set-back axle options.

The R Series was available in three alternative West Coast specs, reflecting



B-80 oilfield flatbeds operated in the US, Australia and elsewhere. Flat-top fenders were an identification feature.



The M125 artillery prime mover served alongside its M123 fifth-wheel tank transporter tractor stablemate.



Mountains of room! An Iranian Mack R Series ballast tractor. Macks were assembled in Iran from 1968 until 1983.



A pristine R Series with sleeper box, photographed at the annual Kelsall Rally in Cheshire.



One of a pair of 1975 ex-military prototype COE F997SXs with oversized wheels and tyres and planetary axles operated in Iran.

Mack's commitment – then as now – to trucks optimised for operation in Western states. Mountainous terrain and high GCWs demand higher power, resulting in chassis that combine strength with reduced weight. With the LTSW of the mid-1940s, Mack set the pace among manufacturers on the East side of the US in offering Western model variants.

Alongside cabover and short-hood models for a variety of market niches, in the heyday of the US long-haul COEs, Mack fielded the F Series, introduced in 1962. The chassis was asymmetrical, with the right-side frame rail splayed to accommodate Mack or Cummins units variously with six or eight cylinders and outputs from 180 to 375bhp. Long haul sleeper-cab Macks continued with the 1975 Cruise-Liner cab-over, produced until 1983. Its 1977 normal control Super-Liner counterpart remained in production until 1993. The precursor of the present range was the CH/CL Series, launched in 1988 and available with up to 500 bhp.

## RENAULT OWNERSHIP

In 1990 Mack became a wholly-owned subsidiary of Renault Vehicle Industries and with Volvo's subsequent takeover of Renault, Mack became a Volvo subsidiary in 2001. Logically, manufacturing is being harmonised with Volvo's North American operations that began with the Swedes' 1981 acquisition of



D Series Macks included U model variants with offset cabs. Presumably a British firm, did this one operate in the UK?

White. The takeover led to Mack quitting Allentown, Pennsylvania, its home for 103 years.

The present Mack range divides into four basic series: Pinnacle highway trucks, Granite construction trucks, Titan heavy haulers, forward-control LR refuse trucks and TerraPro concrete pumbers. Engines are in the 325-505bhp range, with a Cummins natural gas option for the TerraPro.

Despite being the nation that inspired the

adoption of the iconic Bulldog trademark, Britain is one market where Mack conspicuously – or perhaps more correctly inconspicuously – failed to establish itself. The UK operation was set up chiefly to supply ex-WW2 truck spares, typically for 6x6-based snow ploughs. Over the ten years from 1954, small numbers of UK-designed Macks were also built, including an 8-ton 4x4 with Bedford TA cab and front-end reminiscent of a B Series. Wonder if any survive? ♦



Introduced in 1962, the F Series propelled Mack to the fore in the high-style long-haul COE sleeper cab market.



The suitably massive CL350ST logging tractor was designed and built by Mack's former Canadian factory.



Mack Australia's 1990s/early-2000s top of the range 600bhp Big Foot, for gross combination weights up to 300 tonnes.



Mack's current heavy-duty construction Granite model range includes 6x4, twin-steer, lifting axle and tri-drive specs.



As well as aero-style long-haulers like this, the current Pinnacle range includes classic slab radiator model options.



My personal favourite at the event was this Scania 142E.

## The Heavy Equipment and Model Show

Chris Newton reports on the show held on October 16, 2016

**T**he Heavy Equipment and Model Show saw a change of venue in 2016, and was held at Turf Moor (Burnley Football Club) on Sunday 16th October 2016. As well as many modern trucks on display outside, visitors were also treated to some classic trucks as well, a few of which I have photographed here.

First up, and my personal favourite from this event, was the superbly turned out Scania 142E V8 belonging to John Somerscales of Lincolnshire.

Next up we have the ERF belonging to John Macadam, and on a K plate this truck will soon be approaching 25 years old. The company has expanded in recent times but its original roots stem back to their original headquarters in Colne, Lancashire.

My third photo brings us on to another well known and established company, T&D Cotterill (T/A Seaways Services) based in Simonstone near Burnley. Whilst they run several ERFs in mint condition, a Foden, Iveco and DAFs, their oldest truck is a Scammell, reg NGF 875.

Moving on now to Ruttle Plant Hire, which brought along a rather rare Leyland Landtrain, reg DFR 998Y. This truck is believed to have been converted, as it started life as a tractor unit to pull their exhibition trailer, and is now a long wheelbase rigid vehicle.

Fagan & Whalley, also now based in Simonstone, brought along their Scania



John MacAdam & Son's superb ERF heavy recovery vehicle.

113M, reg M849 YBV. Robert Wellock from Skipton included his immaculate ERF EC6, T58 JVU, which to my knowledge is still a working truck as I recently saw her making deliveries in Burnley.

The Foden, E234 PHG, currently sees occasional use with Wards of Burnley, and with its winch and lifting gear will surely be adequate for lifting and moving heavy equipment.

The DAF 2800 of V Pearce shows just how much smaller the cab is compared to today's modern trucks, but this well presented truck still looks capable of doing a day's work.

My final chosen truck to feature is the Booths left-hand-drive Scania 143 V8 which looked simply stunning. I imagine it could still make light work of any heavy haulage it was required to do! ♦



Robert Wellock's ERF EC6 is still very much a working truck – see HC September 2015.



T&D Cotterill are based in Simonstone near Burnley, and own this Scammell MU, reg NGF 875.



This Ruttle Plant Hire Leyland Landtrain started life as a tractor unit to pull an exhibition trailer.



Fagan & Whalley, based in Simonstone, brought along their Scania 113M.



V Pearce's superb DAF 2800.



This superb ex military Foden still see occasion use with Wards of Burnley.



My final chosen truck is the Booth's left-hand-drive Scania 143 V8.

# J C Bell

## HAULAGE CONTRACTORS



**J C Bell Haulage Contractors are heavily involved in Scotland's quarrying industry. Bob Weir went to Newhouse to meet up with Gavin Bell, and check out his collection of classic tippers.**

If the secret to running a successful business is 'location, location, location', Gavin's family has got it down pat. The company's headquarters is situated on the M8 corridor between Edinburgh and Glasgow, a route that passes through some of Scotland's largest quarries. The Bell working fleet of tippers is a regular sight running along the motorway, and Gavin has negotiated contracts with the likes of well-known companies such as Aggregate Industries and the Breedon Group.

"My father started the business in 1969," he recalls. "Back in those days he just had the one lorry, a Leyland Super Comet. Like a lot of contractors in what is basically a rural area, he combined his tipper business with part-time farming."

Bell Snr's new business also coincided with the building of the M8, one of the busiest motorways in the UK. Apart from Edinburgh and Glasgow the motorway also

serves other large communities, including Airdrie, Coatbridge, Greenock, Paisley and Livingston. Work started in 1965, and was mostly completed by 1980.

"The M8 certainly made a difference to what is known as Scotland's Central Belt," said Gavin, "Unfortunately the traffic flow has steadily increased over the years, so the road is generally very busy."

The Bell family moved to their current home at Langside farm in 1978. When Gavin's father passed away in 1995, he went into partnership with his mother. He said: "By this time the fleet had grown to four Leyland Reivers. Over time we decided to switch makes to Scania, and have stayed with them ever since."

The nearest Aggregate Industries site at Duntilland Quarry is only a couple of miles away, which is obviously a big advantage. Apart from excellent communications like the M8, it allows Gavin to turn the lorries round in record time.

### Today's fleet

"Like any haulage operation time is money, and the vehicles need to be out working," said Gavin. "Fortunately, we have a loyal group of drivers, who have been with the company for many years. We currently run a fleet of around 19 tippers, using 23 operators. Apart from Aggregate Industries, we also haul all over Scotland for the Breedon Group. I believe they are the largest independent construction materials company in the UK. This is a more recent contract, and we basically put eight vehicles and drivers at their disposal. The lorries go wherever they are needed, even to remoter locations like the Isle of Skye."

Gavin is one of a growing number of younger owner/operators, who are also interested in collecting classic commercials.

He said: "My father never had the time to get involved, so I am the first person in our family to take up the challenge. I suppose I've been at it now for about 12 years. My first lorry was an old Super Comet, which was



As fine a line-up of Scottish commercials as you'd wish to see, and all with a Bell family connection.

identical to my father's first truck. I decided to acquire the vehicle, and have never looked back."

Having got the bit between his teeth, his collection has come on leaps and bounds.

He said: "The 1964 Albion Chieftain was acquired in 2005. I bought the lorry from John Murphy down in Huddersfield. The vehicle is believed to have been owned by the same farmer from new, and served the early part of its life hauling sugar beet. It is still using its original 'Super Six' diesel, and five-speed gearbox. I preferred the later version of the Chieftain, because it was equipped with a LAD cab."

LAD (Leyland-Albion-Dodge) cabs were popular during the 1950s and 60s, although they had a reputation for being prone to rust. Unfortunately, MRF 226B was no exception.

"I remember I had particular problems getting spare body parts for the cab," Gavin recalls. "Fortunately, my persistence paid off, and I was able to source most of what I needed through the Internet. Using the Internet has made restoration work a lot easier, and certainly saves time."

But although Gavin was able to refurbish the bodywork, the problems did not end there.



Gavin Bell is currently converting a building into a museum to house his collection.

He said: "The lorry had originally been fitted with an Edbro ram, along with a lightweight tipper more suitable for the farming industry. Unfortunately, this was also in a poor state, and had to be replaced. Luckily we had just started making our own aluminium tippers on site, so that went a long way to solving the problem."

### Building tippers

As is often the way with good ideas, one thing quickly led to another. It was not long before word got around, and Gavin was soon

building tippers for other local contractors. Apart from new projects, this also included painting and repair work. It was a useful string to the company bow, when the aggregate side of the business got a bit slack.

"The Albion took three years to restore, before the lorry made its rally debut in 2008," said Gavin. "By this time I had also acquired a 1979 Leyland Clydesdale."

Gavin was attracted to the lorry, because it was very similar to the Reivers that used to be in service with his father. His only regret was that he also parted with the Super Comet that he had acquired from Andrew Garrick down at Buxton in 2003.

He said: "The Clydesdale is the standard article, and was acquired from William Johnstone at Dalmellington over in Ayrshire. I believe the lorry was originally new to farming contractors Antell Brothers Ltd, based at Wimborne in Dorset. Apparently they used the lorry for transporting animal feed."

Gavin's 1968 Albion Clydesdale has also got family connections, and reminds him of his younger days watching the family business grow from strength to strength.

"I also acquired the lorry because of the Biggar connection," he said, "Biggar is just a



BEL 311T is a regular on the Scottish vintage vehicle circuit.



All the tipper bodies on Gavin's classic commercials are made on site.



Kings & Co used to be a well-known haulage company north of the Border.



short distance from here, and is the spiritual home of Albion Motors. Once again, I relied on the Internet. The condition of this lorry also left a lot to be desired. The metalwork was in such poor condition, that we ended up having to source a donor cab from another vehicle. The rest of the bodywork also had to be replaced, and we ended up accumulating the parts from here and everywhere. Fortunately, the lorry's mechanics were in better shape, and the vehicle is still using its original engine, gearbox and axles."

### Sense of history

As with many collectors Gavin has a keen sense of history, when it comes to his old commercials. He likes to confirm a vehicle's provenance where possible, although there are often some grey areas.

"I actually got in touch with the Albion Foundation based in Biggar, and they were able to confirm that the Clydesdale had originally been new to a commercial motor dealer down in Yorkshire. Unfortunately the trail went cold after that, and the rest of the lorry's history is a blank."

The most recent lorry in Gavin's collection is the 1976 Mercury. The vehicle



The cabs of all four lorries have been painstakingly restored. Pictured here are the AEC and LAD-cabbed Albion Chieftain.





Left: VWX 297F is fitted with a donor cab from another lorry. Right: MRF 226B is equipped with Leyland's 'Super Six' engine. The Chieftain was available in two basic models the tipper haulage CH13, and the CH17 tractor unit.



The names of Gavin's daughters adorn the back of the family's 'Moggie' van.



would have been one of the last to wear the proud AEC badge, before the name disappeared from commercial vehicles in 1977.

"I was in two minds whether to buy the lorry at the time, because the other restorations had been quite difficult and time consuming," he explained. "Then I spotted it on eBay, and decided to make a bid. The vehicle looked in better condition than some of the earlier restorations and AEC trucks from this period don't come on the market that often. The seller lived in Yorkshire, and I arranged to have it delivered up to Scotland by low-loader. Unlike a lot of my other classics the AEC had already been partially restored, and was in reasonable condition.

The cab in particular, had been given a lot of attention. However, it still needed a mountain of work, and we spent hundreds of man hours licking it into shape. As is our usual practice, we decided to build a body for the lorry ourselves. When we were stripping it down, I had noticed some yellow paint. It reminded me of the time when my father used to work out of Kings & Co's quarries, so I decided to paint the tipper in their company's colours of yellow and khaki. I believe the firm was eventually taken over by Tarmac."

### Tarmac Roadstone Ltd

Kings & Co Ltd was created in 1899 by James Nicoll Cuthbert, and Robert King, a carter based near Beith. They opened quarries in Ayrshire, and expanded the business until they were acquired by Derbyshire Stone Ltd in 1965. A few years later the company was merged with Tarmac Roadstone, and was renamed Tarmac Derby Ltd. The name eventually reverted back to Tarmac Roadstone Ltd.

Paintwork plays a big part in Gavin's restorations, but unlike many other collectors this is also done in-house. Fortunately he has sufficient space at Langside farm to handle the whole restoration process. This includes welding and metal fabrication. The vehicles are also serviced on-site in the family's well-equipped workshop.

He said: "Obviously keeping everything under wraps is very important, especially during the long Scottish winters. This also allows us to work on the commercials when we have the time. We attend most of the big rallies during the summer season, and usually take along several vehicles."

Although Gavin prefers larger commercials, he also owns a 1969 Morris Minor van that has a special place in the collection.

He said: "The van is identical to the one that was used by my late father-in-law in his local bakery business. I bought the van about ten years ago, unseen on eBay. As I recall, the seller lived in Dorset. The condition was a bit rough to say the least, and in hindsight I should have taken my time and shopped round for a van in better shape. Fortunately, one of my work colleagues, Alistair Scott, carried out the restoration. He is highly skilled, and did a great job. Mr Christie was delighted after we had finished the work, and used to take the van for the occasional spin. It certainly brought back some fond memories. We also gave the Morris another makeover a couple of years ago, after my father-in-law unfortunately passed away."

Although Gavin has put together an impressive collection, he is still on the lookout for new acquisitions.

"I recently picked up an Atkinson Borderer and Morris FFK that are waiting to be restored," he said. "I've also constructed a purpose-built storage shed to house them in. I'm slowly converting it into a museum for the collection, and there's still plenty of room to fill."

If Gavin has anything to do with it, the new building will soon be bursting at the seams! ♦

# From WRECKS to riches



**Remember the old Corgi Ford Transit Mk2 models that came in two sizes? Dean Reader used to own several examples so he was delighted to come across this real 1971 version, but in much better condition than his, thanks to 78-year-old Doug Bradley.**

**S**ometimes, we contributors get told of many fine examples of classic commercials, perhaps belonging to friends of friends, and this old 'rattle bones' is a prime example of that.

The wrecker, or tow truck/breakdown truck to us Brits, belongs to Paul Bundy's friend Doug Hadley. You will recall that Paul's delightful grocer Minor pick-up was featured in the November 2016 issue of HC, and he also has a fine Bedford CF drop-side truck being restored, but let us return to Doug's white road warrior, which is his ninth restoration in two years.

## HARD AS NAILS

The two gents from Lincoln are the first to admit it was never meant to be a trophy hunter; it has been restored from a rather rough barn-find, but with careful attention to

keep it as original as was possible. With Doug being a tad shy, Paul - who helped with the project - tells me: "It was built in August 1971 and still has the 2000cc V4 engine, as fitted to the longer wheelbase models. As far as we know it has always been a breakdown truck from new, but who actually built it we have no idea; it may even have been a home-brewed affair judging by the design and quality of some of the recovery parts, like the bumpers". He continues: "What we do know is it started life working for a chap from the Forest Hill area of South East London and has had just four owners from new, and in the glove-box were business cards from scrapyards and motor breakers from all over South London dating back to the 70s and 80s." And this is something that I absolutely love. Not only does it show the truck's true history throughout that

Waiting to be unleashed.  
More stance than a pit bull!



Owner Doug with his Transit.



Practical interior – but no newspaper in sight!



Work lights and a beacon are all parts of a good outfit.



Simple instruments and switches on the binnacle are all that's required.

time period, but having watched many TV shows and films from the day, I can imagine the Tranny starring in one, crawling around the back streets, spewing out smoke and with chains rattling, possibly looking for dumped or rotting motors, or even being involved in somewhat dubious matters; "need a rival gang's car lifted out of your manor? We'll use the truck and take it to the crusher, job done!" I'm not saying that is what happened of course but it's the perfect tool for a TV fight, and those hardened bumpers would do some damage should said gang decide to make chase with their Jaguar or Humber.

## BODY BEAUTIFUL

The Ford was taken back to a rolling chassis cab so the full extent of rot could be seen and it did need some work, certainly underneath.

More proof of its hard life splashing around muddy wet yards were the many metal plates that were simply plated over rot on the chassis, and Doug decided to virtually make a new chassis starting from the cab backwards. This was then protected with paint before attention turned to the cab. Rather than messing around with welding and grinding on the doors, they were changed for a set of Mk2 items which saved a lot of time and effort. However much more needed doing. This included a new-old-stock offside front wing, a new front panel and the inner stepping panels. A sunroof was also removed and the resulting aperture welded shut and suitably blended in.

A quick freshen up of white paint and red lettering instantly transformed the truck, and the original - and working I hasten to add

- orange beacon was re-installed. The front bumper was looking past its sell-by date so this was copied and a new one made out of a more heavy-duty metal, and painted body colour with red chevrons; all ideal for pushing those immobile cars into a more suitable position to load up. Which brings us nicely to the rear.

Those of you expecting to see a typical Harvey Frost crane will be very disappointed. This one is again believed to be some sort of a DIY affair and moves via an underfloor hydraulic ram which when operated pushes up the jib from underneath in a scissor-type action; crude it may be and probably lacking in the amount of height available compared to a Frost version, but effective? Very, lifting a car enough to make towing viable. The framework is again basic and made from



The finished article with typical period livery of bright paint and lettering.

hardened steel and welded to the floor, this area being suitably strengthened to boot. The rear body sides were constructed using strong chequer plate with the edges all cut, folded and welded up, making it all appear as a very professional outfit, the black contrasting well with the white and red. A large tool chest for bars, tools, straps and other recovery gear sits behind the rear panel. The only non-original addition the Transit received were the 'chariot' side buttresses which many older tow trucks

used to have to aid rigidity, and I think gives it a sort of bulldog look, personally speaking.

The interior is also largely original, with the exception of a new headlining done by Doug's wife Marie, and as we all know with Mk1s, just a few gauges, switches and lights situated on the binnacle, all of which do their job admirably and that's all that is required isn't it? The only non-standard items are the seats which are out of a later model, but only purists would know and probably be worried

about it - and besides, they have seat covers fitted so it doesn't really matter; it's a working vehicle after all.

The final result is a rather smart truck that is ready for use again perhaps with a recovery company, although I doubt it would look as impressive hauling a Ford Focus into the showground as it would with a Mk1 Escort or Cortina. But I had just one more question for Doug - where is the archetypal Michelin man on the roof?! ♦



Crude but effective rear hoist.

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# It's all in the timing

Richard Lofting takes us through the process of timing petrol engines.



**1** Checking the dynamic timing is easy with the correct timing light. You may ask why it is in the air - the safety latch jammed on the ramp!

**W**ith modern vehicles, the procedure of setting the timing on a petrol engine manually has long gone, it is only the old ones that are left. All of the engine's requirements are controlled by the vehicle ECU, that little box of tricks with loads of wires coming from it. On our older commercial vehicles, things are a bit more simple - petrol power meant a carburettor and a distributor with a set of points.

In all the years I've driven a vehicle with a carburettor and a set of points, I always got home, as all you had to check if you conked out was whether you had petrol and if you had a spark. Today you need an expensive 'box of tricks' to plug in under the dash somewhere and read out error codes to find out what's wrong - it's called progress!

## The Distributor

The distributor is a fairly simple mechanical device that switches the power to the points and then distributes the HT current to the correct spark plug. Of course this needs to be at the correct time to make the engine run properly.

## Timing

The old way was to set the points gap to, usually 14 - 16 thou, with a set of feeler gauges when the distributor cam was on its peak holding the points open. Later on you

still needed the gap at the points, but the dwell angle was measured and set using a test meter, which electrically worked out the time the points were open in the revolution of the distributor shaft and gave the dwell measurement in degrees.

## Points

The condition of the points contacts has a bearing on how well they perform. If the points are all rough and pitted, then there is less chance that you will have a good reliable spark. It is always best to replace the points if new ones are available, but the old ones can be cleaned. Having said that, do not overdo the cleaning as it is only the surface of the contacts that are hardened - too vigorous a cleaning will wear right through the hardened layer. I am not sure whether they are still available, but at one time you could purchase a points cleaning file designed for the job. Many of the older style points came apart, allowing better access for cleaning. If this is the case you can rub them along the edge of a sharpening stone to take off any 'mountains' that have formed where the metal of the other contact has welded itself on. The important thing is to keep the contacts flat. It is easy to rub a slant on one or other of the contacts which will upset the setting and operation, and be nigh on impossible to set the gap correctly.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Beware - it is possible to get a sharp electrical shock from the coil and/or its leads.
- Beware of the moving fan blades/belts if trying to get the timing light in the right place.
- If everything is covered in old oil wear the right gloves for skin protection.

## TOOLS REQUIRED

- Small spanners and screwdrivers.
- Timing Light
- Fine wet and dry for cleaning.
- WD 40 or similar.

## Setting the points

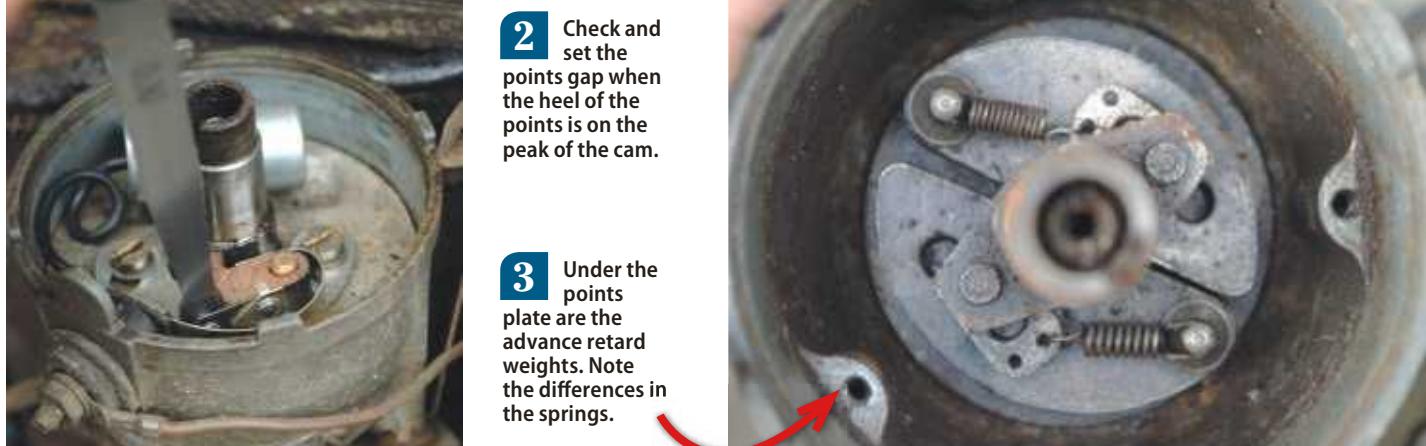
To the old hands, setting the points gap is easy and requires little explanation, but to any newcomers to our older style engines it will all be new. If the old set of points are still in place, make a note of how things are, and where the wires are connected and any insulating spacers are placed. Most sets of points in the heritage era, especially on commercials, would have invariably been made by Lucas, although there are



**2** Check and set the points gap when the heel of the points is on the peak of the cam.



**4** The amount of play in the distributor bearings can be assessed by rocking the distributor shaft side to side.



**3** Under the points plate are the advance retard weights. Note the differences in the springs.



**5** Here the weights are closed as they would be at tick-over, or with the engine stopped.

exceptions. I remember fitting a set of points for a neighbour who had a Moskvitch van (from the Soviet era from Russia), and everything looked almost identical to the Lucas set up. However, I couldn't get a spark, and it took me ages to discover that the Russian system was wired exactly opposite - where the Lucas system used insulators where the wires joined the points, the Russian system did not. If I remember rightly (it was about 45 years ago) the whole points assembly were insulated from the distributor body - all I am saying is be observant! Even if you are going to use a dwell meter, set the points with a set of feeler gauges to the correct gap first, get the peak of the cam on the points heel and adjust

until the feeler gauge will slide comfortably in the gap between the points. You then set the dwell angle by opening or closing the gap according to the meter reading. Once correct, tighten the retaining screw.

Often overlooked is the condenser, sometimes inside the distributor and sometimes on the outside. It is best to replace it with a new one while fitting or cleaning the points. The most obvious tell-tale sign of its failure is the fact that the points will look sooty and charred. The condenser is a capacitor that is connected across the points; a laymen's explanation is that when the points open, the surge of back EMF current is greater than that necessary to produce the spark, and the

condenser absorbs the extra energy. Each time the points close again, the stored energy is dissipated, as in effect the two sides of the condenser are shorted together. If this excess energy is not stored in this way there will be more sparks and consequently burning of the points. There are ways to test a condenser, but you need the right equipment.

### Rotor arm

The rotor arm's only function is to distribute the spark to the right lead emerging from the distributor cap. The only thing that can go wrong with it is if the insulation breaks down and the spark energy goes to earth. Sometimes it gets a bit sooty, and



**6** Notice the weights are where they would be when the engine is on full chat. At this point the camshaft has turned to the maximum advanced position.

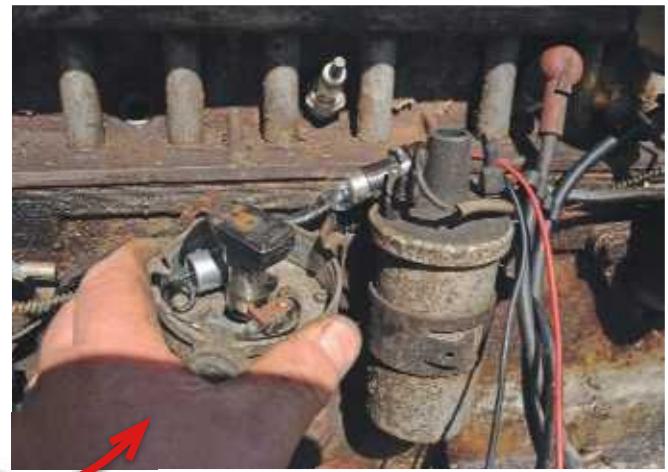


**7** Here the points have been cleaned ready to go back together.



**8** A bulb, lamp holder and leads are ideal to set the point at which the points open.

**9** With the clamp loosened, the distributor body can be rotated. By turning the distributor until the cam lobe is approaching the points heel, with the engine timing set to what the manufacturer gives for the static timing.



**10** At the exact moment the points start to open the lamp will light. Now tighten the clamp screw.

**11** The best way to clean the rotor arm is on the side of a tyre.





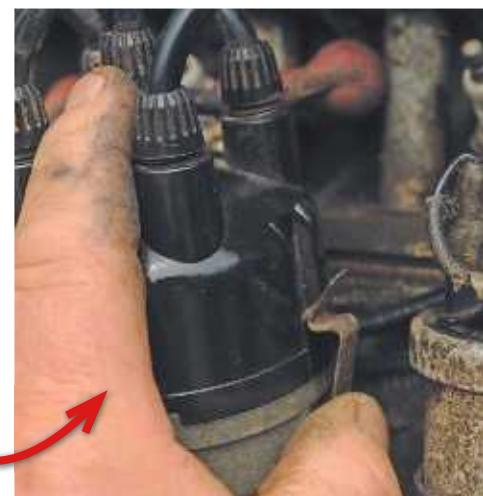
**12** It's worth checking the distributor cap for cracks, as this will lead to tracking and misfiring.



**13** In this case it had gone right through and is close to the HT outlet.



**14** Always check the carbon brush and spring before replacing the cap.



**15** When replacing the cap ensure it is clipped on properly.



**16** A squirt of WD 40 or similar will drive out any moisture within the cap. Allow to evaporate before replacing.

the best way to clean it is rub the edge on a vehicle tyre, as this avoids wearing the metal away which would increase the gap that the spark has to jump. I have known them to fail between the metal contact and the distributor shaft, and this can be hard to find. Substitution with a known good one will prove whether it is good or bad.

### Setting the static timing

If for any reason you have had the distributor out of the engine, unless you marked its exact position before you removed it, you will need to set the static timing before you can start the engine, and then set it dynamically once the engine is running. The idea of setting the static timing is to get the timing somewhere near the mark so that the engine will run. The position at which the points begin to open needs to be determined, as it is this exact moment that causes the current to be interrupted to the primary coil inside the coil unit. When the circuit is broken there is a surge or pulse produced called back EMF, and it is this current that causes the secondary coil in the coil unit to produce the HT spark; in effect the coil unit is a transformer, it multiplies the voltage of the 6 or 12 volt battery up to several thousand volts for a very short duration so that it will jump the gap at the spark plug.

Determining the point at which the points open can be done by eye, but a better way is with a bulb in a bulb holder and a pair of leads. When this is clipped across the points, and the ignition turned on, at the very moment that the points begin to open, the bulb will light.

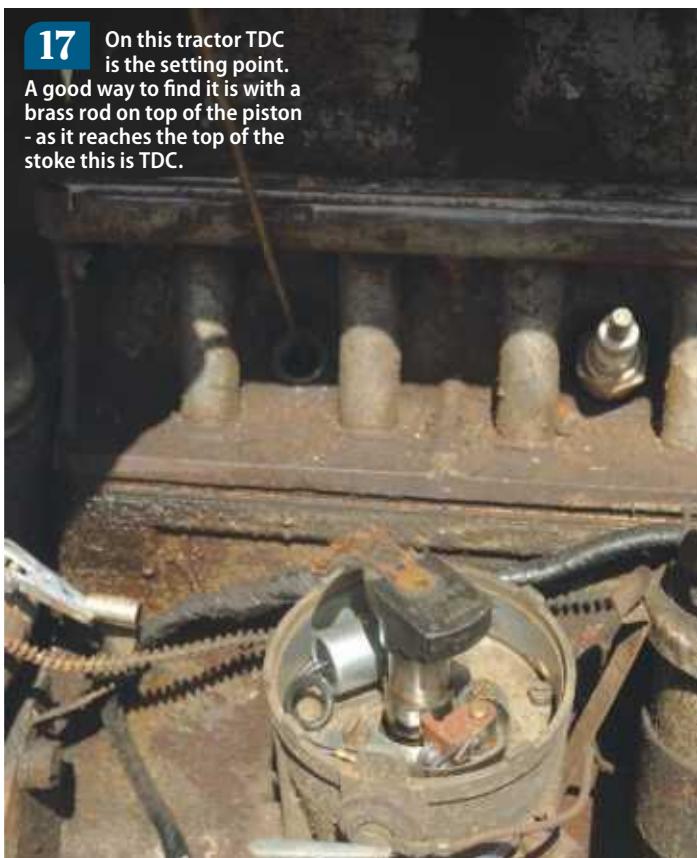
### The distributor body

The main body of the distributor, apart from the points, contains the advance retard weights that alter the timing slightly when the engine is at certain revs; when an engine is revving at a fast rate the engine will run better with its timing advanced, and at tick-over it needs to be a little

retarded. The rate at which the weights control the advance/retard is governed by the springs - they have different spring rates to stop any bouncing, but are fitted in a pair. There are specialist firms that can supply them for most old vehicles. The other issue within the body itself are the bearings - if there is any wear it will upset the correct operation of the points, and in consequence the timing to a certain degree - no pun intended.

The sharp eyed will notice I have used a Ferguson tractor in the photo's. Most early commercials were more or less the same, and it was a lot easier taking the pictures where I could get round the vehicle.

**17** On this tractor TDC is the setting point. A good way to find it is with a brass rod on top of the piston - as it reaches the top of the stoke this is TDC.



**18** With all back in place the engine should now run how it was intended.

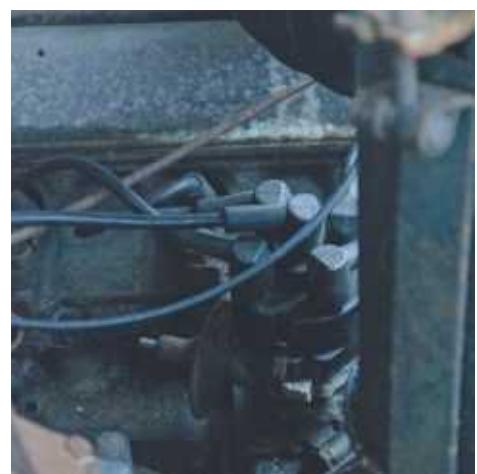
**19** Later examples have a vacuum advance as well as the weights. This example is on a Mini, and a tube goes from the unit to the intake.



**21** With the timing light pointing at the markers and the sensing wire fitted to No1 plug lead, if the timing is ok then the right marker will have the pulley notch stationary in the strobe light.

**22** The 'business end' of the timing light has a xenon tube that emits a bright light at the point of spark for a very short duration.

**20** The hardest job is to see the timing marks on the pulley and the pointer. I find 'tipex' or white nail varnish make good markers.



**23** A dwell meter can be used to set the points. The wires connect across the coil count the pulses and give a reading in degrees.

**24** The distributor set up on a Series 2 Land Rover, almost identical to the Mini.

**FINISH**

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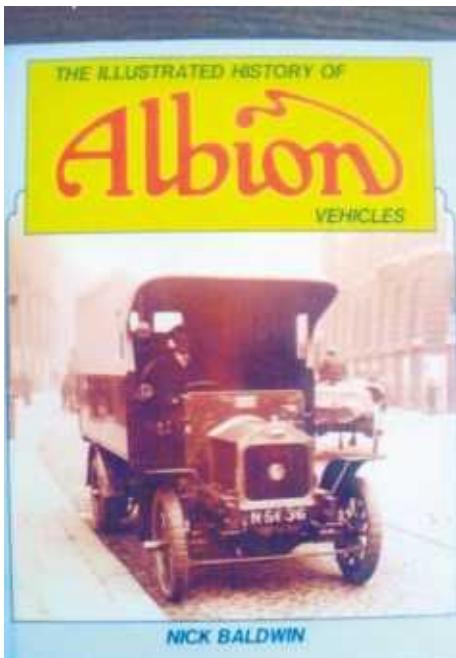


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# Next month

On sale March 17, 2017

## ONCE HEARD – NEVER FORGOTTEN



From the day he was born in 1955, Stuart Ritchie has lived his life surrounded by all manner of sounds. However one distinctive symphony from his earliest days which he never tires of hearing is the Commer TS3 two-stroke. But unlike those of us who need to search the rally scene to hear one, Stuart has his own superbly restored 1959 Commer-Unipower conversion.

## NEW KID IN TOWN



It is always a cause for celebration when a Foden lorry joins the vintage vehicle circuit. Bob Weir met up with Jimmy Cairnie, and his recently restored 'Mickey Mouse'.

## SOUNDS WONDERFUL



The modern day road-going truck is certainly far more efficient in virtually every domain when compared to its goods carrying counterpart of yesteryear. But as Bob Tuck reckons, one thing it will never hold a candle to is the sheer variety of sounds which those magnificent machines of old surrounded themselves.

**PLUS** Workshop. On location. Archive album. News and events & More.

# Events Guide 2017

## 33rd 1000 ENGINE RALLY

Organised by Five Counties  
Vintage Machinery Organisation

**17th & 18th June 2017**  
At Astle Park, Chelford, Macclesfield SK11 9AD  
Email: [info@1000engines.co.uk](mailto:info@1000engines.co.uk)

**KELLSALL STEAM & VINTAGE RALLY**

Churches View Farm, Kelsall  
Road, Ashton, Chester, CH3 8BH  
24th & 25th June 2017  
[www.kelsallsteamrally.co.uk](http://www.kelsallsteamrally.co.uk)  
[kelsallsteamrally@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:kelsallsteamrally@hotmail.co.uk)

**SMALLWOOD VINTAGE RALLY LTD**  
27th, 28th & 29th May 2017  
**EDWIN FODEN'S BIRTHPLACE**  
Situated on A50 Newcastle Road  
**SMALLWOOD, CHESHIRE**  
For further info please contact: Brenda  
01782 511477 / 07901 595045

The committee of  
**MASHAM STEAM RALLY**  
look forward to seeing you  
at our 52nd Rally  
**15th & 16th July 2017**  
[www.mashamsteamrally.co.uk](http://www.mashamsteamrally.co.uk)

**ACKWORTH SCAMMELL SPECTACULAR**  
Historic Vehicle Show  
**22 - 23 APRIL**  
Ackworth Water Tower  
A628 Ackworth Road,  
1mile from Pontefract, West Yorkshire  
For more info tel: 07816018291 or 01977 617327

**The AEC Society 34th Annual Rally**  
Saturday - Sunday 27th and 28th May 2017  
Newark Showground, Nottinghamshire, NG24 2NY  
For classic passenger and heavy commercial vehicles of all ages.  
Vehicle entries free including one passenger  
Pedestrian entries 1 Day £10 including programme  
2 Day £15 including programme. AEC members and under 16s FREE  
£1 reduction with original copy of this advert  
Entry forms from Howard Berry, 07504 974776  
[membership@aecsociety.com](mailto:membership@aecsociety.com) or [www.aecsociety.com](http://www.aecsociety.com)  
Look forward to seeing everyone

**BUCKINGHAM MUSEUM RAILWAY CENTRE HISTORIC COMMERCIAL VEHICLE RALLY**  
**Father's Day - Sunday 18th June 10.30am-5pm**  
Admire the rally vehicles and enjoy steam train rides!  
W: [www.bucksrailcentre.org](http://www.bucksrailcentre.org) T: 01296 655720  
E: [marketing@bucksrailcentre.org](mailto:marketing@bucksrailcentre.org)

**DACORUM STEAM AND COUNTRY FAIRY - POTTER END**  
29th and 30th July 2017 10am - 5pm  
GREEN CROFT FARM, POTTER END, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, HERTS HP1 2SG  
[www.dacorummachineryandsteam.co.uk](http://www.dacorummachineryandsteam.co.uk)  
or call 01923 266491 / 07879442039  
Adults £8. Children & Concessions £5. Family Tickets £20

## WEST OXON STEAM & VINTAGE RALLY

We look forward to seeing you  
in 2017 on 22nd and 23rd July  
Ducklington, Witney, Oxon

For further details tel (stalls) Anne 01367 810415  
or (exhibits) Eamon 07977 546699

**THE THORNCROFT SOCIETY**  
**26th BASINGSTOKE FESTIVAL OF TRANSPORT**

**SUNDAY 14th MAY 2017**  
at War Memorial Park, Basingstoke  
Contact John Bond 01962 883246

## Classic Commercial Show

**Donington Park**

**23rd & 24th September 2017**  
**Donington Park, Castle Donington, Derby, DE74 2RP**  
**Tel 01406 373421**  
**truckshows@kelsey.co.uk**  
**[www.truckinglive.co.uk](http://www.truckinglive.co.uk)**



**2017 Spring Tractor World Show Plus Sunday Classic Commercial Show**  
Including the large HJ Pugh auction sale on the Saturday.

**25th & 26th February 2017**  
Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Worcestershire, WR13 6NW  
Tel 016974 51882.  
[www.tractorworldshows.co.uk](http://www.tractorworldshows.co.uk)

**GRAND HENHAM STEAM RALLY**

We look forward to  
seeing you at our rally  
**16th & 17th September 2017**

Email- [info@henhamsteamrally.com](mailto:info@henhamsteamrally.com)  
[www.henhamsteamrally.com](http://www.henhamsteamrally.com)

## Duncombe Park Steam Rally



Caravan & camping spaces available!

Great Yorkshire Traction Engine Club  
[gytec.weebly.com](http://gytec.weebly.com)

**1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2017**

Duncombe Park, Helmsley  
North Yorkshire, YO62 5EB

Traction Engines - Working Displays - Vintage Tractors  
Craft Fair & Fairground - Trade Stands - Licensed Bar & Refreshments



**2017 Autumn Tractor World Show Plus Sunday Classic Commercial Show**  
Including the large HJ Pugh auction sale on the Saturday.

**7th & 8th October 2017**  
Newbury Showground, Priors Court, Hermitage, Thatcham, RG18 9NU  
Tel 016974 51882.  
[www.tractorworldshows.co.uk](http://www.tractorworldshows.co.uk)



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